

# Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions:

*A Course on Bible Texts and Versions  
and a 10-Fold Defense of the King  
James Bible*

By David Cloud

*Way of Life Literature Advanced Bible Studies Series*

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Revision January 2006

1-58318-087-7

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***Published by***  
***Way of Life Literature***

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Printed in Canada by  
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

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# Dedication

I dedicate this book to the Lord's "babes," to the foolish things of this world, the weak, the base, the despised, to the lowly but studious saints who, though ridiculed by those who are "wise after the flesh," humbly and simply believe God's promises and are not puffed up or led astray by scholarolatry.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"  
(Matthew 11:25).

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

“In regard to Bible versions many contemporary Christians are behaving like spoiled and rebellious children. ... ‘We want a Bible version in our own idiom,’ they clamor. ‘We want a Bible that talks to us in the same way in which we talk to our friends over the telephone. We want an informal God, no better educated than ourselves, with a limited vocabulary and a taste for modern slang.’ ... God is bigger than you are, dear friend, and the Bible version which you must use is not a matter for you to decide according to your whims and prejudices. It has already been decided for you by the workings of God’s special providence. If you ignore this providence and choose to adopt one of the modern versions, you will be taking the first step in the logic of unbelief.” --Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 242, 243

“My apology for bestowing so large a portion of my time on Textual Criticism, is David’s when he was reproached by his brethren for appearing on the field of battle,--‘Is there not a cause?’” --John William Burgon, 1883

“Driving through Birmingham, England, I passed an ‘establishment’ called ‘The Artful Dodger’. And, frankly, there is not a better way to describe Textual Criticism. It shifts, it turns, it establishes, it overturns, it rewrites, it restates, it examines, it ignores, etc.” --Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 9

“We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. *If we do not begin with the Word of God, we shall never end with it!*” --David W. Norris, *The Big Picture*

“We must not permit our judgment to be overawed by great names in the realm of biblical ‘scholarship’ when it is so clearly evident that the distinguished scholars of the present century are merely reproducing the case presented by rationalists during the last two hundred years.” --Terence Brown, Trinitarian Bible Society

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# Assignments

1. Read the two companion books to this course: *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database* and *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.

2. Memorize the following verses:

Psalm 12:6-7  
Psalm 119:89  
Psalm 119:160  
Psalm 138:2  
Matt. 5:18  
Matt. 24:35  
1 Pet. 1:23

3. Each student must write the first three chapters of the Gospel of John by hand, then count the mistakes and see what sort they are. By comparing all of the copies made the students in one class, it will become evident that normal copying errors can be corrected with relative ease simply by comparing manuscripts. For example, if a word is omitted or misspelled by one student, it will probably be correct in the other copies. Likewise, if a student tried to add or delete something maliciously, this could be detected by comparing all of the copies together.

4. Compare the following verses in the KJV and three modern versions of your choice (not counting the NKJV):

John 1:27  
John 3:13  
Acts 8:37  
Acts 20:28  
Romans 14:10  
1 Corinthians 15:47  
Ephesians 3:9  
Colossians 1:14  
1 Timothy 3:16  
1 Timothy 6:5  
Hebrews 1:3

# Note to Teachers and Readers

1. This material is designed to be taught either as one course or to be divided into a basic and an advanced segment.
  - a. The basic segment is Parts I - V.
  - b. The advanced segment is Parts VI - X, with additional material added at the teacher's discretion from the two companion books, *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* and *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, or from any additional source of his choosing. In fact, an entire third course could be made up from material in *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*.
2. Material from the two companion books can be used at any point during the course.
3. The Review Questions and the tests are an important part of the learning process. The Review Questions at the end of each Part help the students to analyze the material properly and to focus on the most important points that have been covered in the classes. The sectional tests are composed of questions culled from the sectional reviews. This is a further step in focusing the student on the most important points of the course. The final test is composed of the most important questions culled from the sectional tests. Thus the final test covers, in our estimation, the most important points of the entire course, the minimum number of things that the student should know by heart so that he can defend the preserved Word of God today.
4. *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* is also designed for private study and can be used effectively outside of a class situation. Though designed as a course, it reads like a book and does not necessarily require a teacher. Again, the Review Questions are an important part of the learning process and if the book is studied privately we urge the student to take the time to answer all of the Review Questions so that the material will be more practically digested.
5. An important resource to compliment this course is the graphical edition of "In the Footsteps of Bible Translators," available at the Way of Life web site -- See <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/in-thefootsteps-bibletrans/>. This is the fruit of two research trips to Great Britain and Europe and it contains a wealth of information together with photographs and video clips of sites pertaining to the history of the Bible, including those pertaining to John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Erasmus, and the King James Bible. It also includes an extensive graphical report on Rome, the headquarters of the apostasy that has resisted the Bible through the centuries. This report is also available on the 2005 edition of the *Fundamental Baptist CD Library*, which is scheduled for publication in September 2005.



# Introduction

## 1. There are many reasons why the Bible version issue must be faced.

- a. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE IT IS FOUNDATIONAL* (Ps. 138:2). The Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. Nothing is more important than the issue of *to what degree* we can have confidence in the Bible that has come down to us through the centuries. Many are saying that this is a side issue, a non-essential, but nothing could be farther from the truth.
- b. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE THERE ARE THREE COMPETING GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS TODAY*.
  - (1) There is the Received Text underlying the King James Bible and other Reformation versions. The Received Text is published today by the Trinitarian Bible Society, the Dean Burgon Society, and others.
  - (2) There is the Critical Greek text based on the Westcott and Hort of 1881. This is published by the United Bible Societies and others. Consider some facts about this New Testament as compared with the Received Text:
    - (a) It is shorter than the Reformation Greek text by 2,886 words, which is the equivalent of the omission of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter.
    - (b) It omits or questions 45 entire verses -- Mt. 12:47; 17:21; 18:11; 21:44; 23:14; Mk. 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 22:43-44; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; John 7:53--8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; and 1 Jn. 5:7.
    - (c) In addition it omits significant portions of 147 other verses.
    - (d) It *weakens* the doctrine of Christ's deity (e.g., it omits "who is in heaven" from Jn. 3:13; it omits "God" from 1 Tim. 3:16) and other key doctrines.

In these studies we will show where and when the "shortened New Testament" of the Critical Greek Text originated.

- (3) There is also the "Majority Text" of Hodges and Farstad published in 1982 by Thomas Nelson.
  - (a) It differs from the Received Text in more than 1,000 places.
  - (b) For example, it omits Mat. 27:35; Lk. 17:36; Acts 8:37; and 1 John 5:7.

We analyze the Majority Text in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part IX,  
“We hold to the KJV because we reject the ‘Majority Text’ position.”

- c. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE OF THE ONSLAUGHT OF MODERN VERSIONS IN THE LAST 50 YEARS*.

Some of the modern English versions since 1952:

1952 -- Revised Standard Version  
1959 -- Berkeley Version in Modern English  
1960 -- New American Standard Bible  
1961 -- New English Bible  
1962 -- Modern King James Version  
----- The Living Bible  
----- Clarified New Testament  
1964 -- Anchor Bible  
1965 -- Amplified Bible  
1966 -- Jerusalem Bible.  
1968 -- Barclay's New Testament  
1970 -- New American Bible  
1971 -- King James II Version  
1972 -- The Bible in Living English  
1973 -- The Common Bible (RSV)  
----- New International Version  
1976 -- Today's English Version (Good News for Modern Man)  
----- The Holy Bible in the Language of Today, An American Translation  
1978 -- Simple English Bible  
1979 -- New King James Bible  
1984 -- A New Accurate Translation  
1988 -- Christian Community Bible Translation  
1989 -- Revised English Bible  
1990 -- Simplified Living Bible  
----- New Revised Standard Version  
1993 -- The Message New Testament  
1995 -- Contemporary English Version  
----- New International Readers Version (NirV)  
----- New International Version Inclusive Language Edition  
1996 -- The Bible for Today's Family  
----- The New Living Translation  
2002 -- Today's New International Version (New Testament)  
----- The Message (whole Bible)  
2004 -- Holman Christian Standard Bible

It is important to understand that the Bible version issue did not really “heat up” for fundamentalists until the 1970s. There were modern texts and versions prior to this, going back to the 1800s, but they were never widely used among fundamentalists or even among evangelicals. The English Revised Version of 1881 was never popular. The same was true for the American Standard Version of 1901. The Revised Standard Version of 1952 was popular only within liberal denominations. The New American Standard Bible of 1960 had a small following among scholarly evangelicals and even a few fundamentalists but it was never widely popular. It was not until the publication of the New International Version that a modern version began to be widely used outside of theologically liberal circles. Faced with the growing popularity of the NIV, many fundamentalists began to look more carefully at the Bible version issue and as a result many books began to appear in defense of the King James Bible. Any time one sees a body of apologetic literature in church history, it is because something has happened to challenge the traditional position in some realm. The number of books defending the KJV has been multiplied since the 1970s for the simple reason that it is being challenged at this time in a way that it was not challenged prior to this.

- d. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE SOME FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS ARE SUPPORTING THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS*. In recent years several books have been published by fundamentalists in support of modern textual criticism.
  - (1) These include *Facts on the Kings Only Debate* by Ankerberg and Weldon (1996); *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* edited by J.B. Williams (1999), *One Bible Only: Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* by Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder (2001), *Bible Preservation and the Providence of God* by Sam Schnaiter and Ron Tagliapietra (2002), and *God’s Word in Our Hands: The Bible Preserved for Us* edited by J.B. Williams and Randolph Shaylor (2003).
  - (2) These books present the standard myths of modern textual criticism. They claim, for example, that the differences between the Received Text and the Critical Text are slight and insignificant and that no doctrine is affected by the textual changes.
  - (3) These books also take a harsh position against those who defend the King James Bible. In the introduction to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, the editor, J.B. Williams, calls the defense of the KJV a “cancerous sore” that has resulted in “a deplorable condition in Fundamentalism.” He describes the defense of the KJV a “mass of misinformation.” Williams and the other fundamentalist writers who have jumped on the modern textual criticism

bandwagon paint the entire field of King James defense with the broad brush of Ruckmanism.

- e. The Bible version issue must be faced *BECAUSE, GENERALLY SPEAKING, ONLY ONE SIDE OF THIS DEBATE IS GIVEN TODAY.*

(1) Consider some examples of this:

- (a) First we have the testimony by a man who trained under the famous Southern Baptist professor A.T. Robertson. This was given in a letter to David Otis Fuller in the 1970s. “Dear Dr. Fuller: On May 12, 1970, you wrote me a very kind letter and sent me some sample materials from your book *Which Bible?* You might as well have been shooting a popgun at a stone wall. My mind was so strongly fortified in the doctrine of Westcott and Hort that I could not for one moment consider the King James Bible. Had I not studied Textual Criticism under the great Dr. A.T. Robertson? I thought that you were just one of those die-hard Fundamentalists who were striving to keep the Christian world under the bondage of traditionalism. Such men are interested only in pleasing the people by catering to their ignorance, prejudice and sentimentality! But just a few weeks ago I happened to read your two books, *Which Bible?* and *True or False?* For the first time a little new light shone in. I saw that there is another side to the argument. DR. ROBERTSON HAD NOT GIVEN US ALL THE FACTS. As I perused your selections from Burgon and Hoskier, the idols of B and Aleph started to totter, and soon they fell off their pedestals. That was all I needed. I bought a copy of the Textus Receptus and am now using it. Thanks to you” (William T. Bruner, Ph.D.).
- (b) Consider, next, the testimony of Alfred Martin, former Vice-President of Moody Bible Institute: “The present generation of Bible students, having been reared on Westcott and Hort, have for the most part accepted the theory without independent or critical examination. To the average student of the Greek New Testament today it is unthinkable to question the theory at least in its basic premises. Even to imply that one believes the Textus Receptus to be nearer the original text than the Westcott-Hort text is, lays one open to the suspicion of gross ignorance or unmitigated bigotry” (Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951).
- (c) Finally, we have the testimony of Dr. Donald Waite. “For about twenty years I was in darkness about this issue. I knew almost nothing of it from roughly 1951 to 1971. I was at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1948 to 1952. That was my Master of Theology. Then I stayed an extra year, 1953. Throughout those years we were simply told to use the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament, which we did in the Greek classes. ... I didn’t know there was any other Greek text. I majored in classic Greek and Latin at the University of

Michigan, 1945-48. I took three years to get my four years of work. ... Then I came to Dallas Seminary. I was learning New Testament Greek, and I didn't pay much heed to the text. ... I just assumed that was the only one to use."

- (2) This situation is typical. What the first testimony said about A.T. Robertson not giving all the facts can be said today about professors at BJU, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, and many other fundamentalist institutions. Students who graduate from these institutions generally have no firsthand knowledge of the writings of Frederick Nolan, John Burgon, Edward Miller, Herman Hoskier, and Edward F. Hills, to mention but a few of the scholarly men who have written in defense of the TR-KJV. What is given in these schools is a mere caricature of the "King James Only" position drawn from the writings of extremists who believe the King James Bible is "advanced revelation" and other such things.
- (3) It is my desire to give all the relevant facts in the Bible text-version debate. I am convinced that if a believer will approach this subject with an open and prayerful heart, desiring to know the truth and willing to follow wherever it leads (Jn. 7:17), leaning not upon his or another man's understanding but leaning solely upon God (Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 17:5), not fearing man (Prov. 29:25) nor honoring man above that which is written (1 Cor. 6:4), basing his position solely upon the Word of God (John 8:31-32), that he will come out on the side of the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Received Greek New Testament and of faithful translations thereof, such as the KJV in English.

## **2. Consider some basic misunderstandings pertaining to this issue:**

- a. The Bible version issue is largely a choice between the old language of the KJV and the updated language of the modern versions. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- b. The changes to the modern versions do not affect doctrine. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- c. The difference between the Greek Received Text and the Critical Text is slight, amounting to only one page of material. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- d. The King James Bible is too difficult for most people to understand. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- e. The scholarship of the Reformation era was inferior to that of today. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

- f. Those who defend the King James Bible believe that the preserved Word of God is only in English and that God's people should not study Greek and Hebrew. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- g. There is no good defense of the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- h. The King James Version has been updated in thousands of places. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- i. Westcott and Hort were evangelical Bible believers. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- j. The modern Critical Text is based on older manuscripts than those upon which the Received Text is based. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- k. Today's evangelical scholarship is dependable. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- l. The Erasmus Received Text is based on a mere handful of manuscripts. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- m. Erasmus promised to add 1 John 5:7 to his Greek New Testament if only one manuscript could be supplied that contained it. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- n. The Bible version issue should not result in divisions among God's people. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- o. It is the defenders of the King James Bible that are causing the trouble. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- p. The King James translators said that all of the versions are good and acceptable. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*
- q. The "thees" and "thous" of the King James Bible should be removed because that was merely Elizabethan English and to remove them has no doctrinal significance. *This is not true, as we will demonstrate in this course!*

### **3. As I approach this issue, I do so with the following biblical presuppositions.**

The evolutionist would have me put aside my biblical presuppositions when I study the natural

record and the textual critic would have me put them aside when I study the manuscript record, but I will not put biblical presuppositions aside for any reason. As David W. Norris wisely observes: “We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. *If we do not begin with the Word of God, we shall never end with it!*” (Norris, *The Big Picture*).

#### Eight Biblical Presuppositions for Approaching the Bible Version Issue

- a. I believe in the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Bible contains everything that we need for faith and practice. It is able to make the believer “perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Obviously, then, nothing else is necessary. I do not have to rely on priests or scholars or tradition or extrabiblical sources.
- b. I believe in the soul liberty of the believer, meaning that each believer can know the truth for himself and is responsible to test everything by God’s Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 2:15-16; 1 Thess. 5:21). Thus, it is evident that the child of God can make his own decision in the important matter of the Bible text-version issue. I do not ask my readers to depend on me and to follow my teaching; I ask them simply to prove all things and hold fast that which is good and to receive my teaching with all readiness of mind and to search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so.
- c. I believe in the simplicity of sound doctrine (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Jn. 2:20). If a doctrine is so complicated that the average child of God must lean upon a specialized priest or scholar, that doctrine is not Scriptural. The New Testament faith is not an elitist issue. It was committed to ordinary people.
  - (1) One example of this is Calvinism. For instance, James White claims that Dave Hunt doesn’t understand Calvinism even though he is an intelligent man, a believer, and he has studied the issue diligently. I am convinced that if something is that complicated it can’t be the truth. (I also believe that Dave Hunt understands Calvinism very well, in spite of what James White claims.)
  - (2) Another example is modern textual criticism. The child of God is required to depend upon the textual scholars, because it is impossible for an ordinary believer to make textual decisions. Textual criticism involves such things as conflation, recension, inversion, eclecticism, conjectural emendation, intrinsic and transcriptional probability, interpolation, statistical probability, harmonistic assimilation, cognate groups, hypothesized intermediate archetypes, stemmatic

reconstruction, and genealogical methods. Consider a sample of textual criticism from A.T. Robertson: “In actual practice appeal should first be made to the external evidence of the documents by first coming to understand the value of internal evidence of single readings. It will be seen that we have to consider the internal evidence of single readings, the internal evidence of single documents, the internal evidence of groups of documents, the internal evidence of classes of documents. That way of putting it appears paradoxical, but it is literally true that the scientific use of the external evidence (documents) turns on the application of the principles of internal evidence as seen in single readings. But the two methods must agree in result if one is to have confidence in his conclusion. ... The two kinds of internal evidence are transcriptional and intrinsic. ... It is best to begin with transcriptional evidence and then to consider intrinsic evidence” (Robertson, *An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, pp. 149-150). It is impossible to reconcile this level of complexity with the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3) and with the scriptural fact that God has chosen the weak of this world to confound the mighty (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:20-29).

d. I believe that all things should be done unto edifying (Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:26; 2 Cor. 12:19; Eph. 4:12, 16, 29). Any biblical research that does not result in spiritual edification is wrongheaded and is disobedience to the plain commands of the Word of God. I can candidly say that none of the many books I have read on modern textual criticism has spiritually edified me. I have found them intellectually interesting, frustrating, and confusing, but never edifying.

e. I believe in the reality of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8).

(1) One of the devil’s chief goals since the Garden of Eden has been to attack and corrupt the Word of God and to confuse people’s minds in regard to it. His first words to Eve were, “Yea, hath God said?” (Gen. 3:1). Consider the following important lessons from this first attack:

(a) The devil questioned God’s Word (v. 1). This is the first step toward openly denying God’s Word. If the devil can cause a person to entertain doubts about the authenticity of the Scriptures *at any point*, it is likely that he can cripple him spiritually and open the way for increasing unbelief. The Bible is questioned on every hand today, even by those who claim to be “evangelicals.” They say, “Did God really create the world in six days?” or “Did God really destroy the entire earth with a flood?” or “Did Moses really write the Pentateuch?” or “Do the Gospels contain the very words of Jesus?” or “Is Revelation really a prophecy of the future?” or “Is Hell really a place of fire and eternal conscious torment?” I see the hand of the old serpent in all such questionings.



- (b) The devil denied God's Word (v. 4). This is the skeptic's approach to the Bible. He mocks it and openly denies that it is true. We find this, too, on every hand, in Hollywood movies, in the pages of popular magazines and newspapers, in bestselling books. The blatant denial of God's Word is even made by those who profess to be Christians.
- (c) The devil substituted his own words for God's Word (v. 5). This is what false religions such as the Roman Catholic Church do with their extra-biblical traditions. They say, "We believe in the Bible but we also believe in our traditions and councils and popes." This was the sin of the Pharisees, who "made the commandment of God of none effect" by their tradition (Mk. 7:9). The dynamic equivalency method of Bible translation also substitutes man's words for God's. (See *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VIII, "We Hold to the King James Bible Because We Reject Dynamic Equivalency.")

- (2) As these studies progress, we will see that the devil has continued to attack God's Word throughout the church age. The child of God must therefore be alert to his activities in this field. It is impossible to understand the Bible text-version issue if one does not understand the devil's hatred of God's Word and if one does not make this fact a prominent part of his "textual criticism."

f. I believe in the pre-eminence of faith (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17; 14:23). The only way to understand the Word of God is by faith.

- (1) Faith is based only on God's Word (Rom. 10:17). The modern textual critic refuses to approach the Bible text-version issue by faith and mocks those who do, and fundamentalists who are supporting the modern texts are following in their footsteps. For example, Samuel Schnaiter of Bob Jones University critiques Wilbur Pickering's Majority Text position as follows: "Finally, although Pickering has avoided an excessive reliance on theological presuppositions in his presentation, it is nevertheless clear that a theological presupposition essentially undergirds his entire purpose" ("Focus on Revelation," *Biblical Viewpoint*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, April 1982, Bob Jones University, "Textual Criticism and the Modern English Version Controversy," p. 72). *How strange and frightful (and instructive) to see a professed fundamentalist criticizing a "theological" approach to the Bible text-version issue!*
- (2) We do not have to answer every question that can be asked (i.e., about the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Atonement, Inspiration, or Preservation); we only have to believe God's Word.
- (3) Our faith must therefore be in God, not in man (i.e., not in human scholarship, in the KJV translators, in Erasmus, or in John Burgon or some other defender of the traditional Reformation text).

- g. I believe in trembling before God's Word (Psa. 138:2; Prov. 30:6; Isa. 66:2; Rev. 22:18-19). The Scripture is not an ordinary book; it is the Word of the Living God and as such one must exercise extreme caution in handling it. Even to tamper with the words of a human author is a serious matter and there are laws against it, but how much more serious is it to tamper with the words of Almighty God! I have read dozens of books by textual critics, and there simply is no fear of God in their approach to the words of Scripture. The textual critic approach is strictly a matter of human scholarship and the Bible is simply another book.
- h. I believe in the necessity of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Apart from the Holy Spirit, nothing about the Bible can be properly understood. Unregenerate men who lack the Spirit are not qualified in this field. The book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man* claims that it doesn't matter if textual critics are skeptics. "... a textual critic may be an unbeliever when it comes to the Bible's doctrinal truths. But when it comes to the Bible's text--to this question of the Bible's words--a textual critic is initially little more than a reporter" (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, p. 71). In his mistitled book "The Truth of the King James Only Controversy," BJU professor Stewart Custer uncritically cites the following men in his "Select Bibliography" -- Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, Alexander Souter, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort. He does not think it is important that his readers know that to a man these critics blatantly denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture. This approach is wrongheaded in the extreme! A wise position was that of Joseph Philpot, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and editor of *The Gospel Standard*. In 1857 he gave six reasons against a revision of the KJV, the first being that the biblical scholars of that day were "notoriously either tainted with popery or infidelity" (Joseph Charles Philpot, "The Authorized Version of 1611," *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). That was true then and it is even truer today. Philpot then asked an important rhetorical question, "And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit?" The biblical answer is NO!

Modern textual criticism, which gave us the modern Bible versions, is not founded upon dependency upon faith or the Holy Spirit or any of the aforementioned things. Textual critic George Ladd wrote: "One does not solve a problem of divergent textual readings by prayer or by the inner illumination of the Holy Spirit; but only by an extensive knowledge and skill in the science of textual criticism" (Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism*, 1967, p. 81). This is an unbelieving position. The Bible is a supernatural and spiritual Book and nothing about it can be known apart from the application of spiritual tools.

Though some evangelicals and fundamentalists who use textual criticism might claim that they also are following the Holy Spirit, the principles of textual criticism are contrary to this. David Sorenson observes: "Some proponents of the critical text may claim that the Holy Spirit has led

them as well. However, the working editors of the critical text are steeped in rationalistic philosophy and scientific reconstruction of the text. Their entire philosophical base is not inclined to such a Fundamentalist notion of seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit” (*Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 58, f 30).

#### **4. My personal testimony about the Bible version issue**

I was not trained in the defense of the King James Bible in Bible College. My conviction on this issue came some years after I graduated. The man that led me to Jesus Christ in the summer of 1973 gave me a King James Bible and that was the Bible that I had as I started my new life in Christ. It was a large print, plain text Bible with no cross-references or marginal notes. A couple or three months later I went to the Southern Baptist bookstore in my hometown of Lakeland, Florida, and asked the sales lady if she could recommend a version that was easier to read. She told me that she did not recommend that I switch from the King James Bible (don’t forget that this was more than 30 years ago!), but when I persisted she sold me a *Today’s English Version* New Testament. I took it home and read it through and found that indeed, it was as easy to read as the morning newspaper; it was also as vapid and spiritually unsatisfying as the morning newspaper! So I put it aside and continued with the King James. I also purchased a *Dickson Analytical Study Bible*. It is a good study Bible in many ways but scattered throughout the text are brackets containing alleged “better readings” from the American Standard Bible. I pretty much ignored them. At that point I understood nothing of the textual issue and I assumed that the modern versions merely updated the King James language.

I attended Tennessee Temple Bible School beginning in the fall of 1974. In Greek class we used the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, but the textual issue was never explained. At that point I still did not know that there is an immense difference between the critical Greek text and the Reformation text. My Greek teacher, Mr. Dean, was educated at Dallas Theological Seminary and his position was that there is no real issue in the textual-versional debate, that the Word of God is in the Critical Text and the Received Text, in the NASV and in the KJV. He taught us that there is no doctrinal issue in this debate. Though only the King James was used in the chapel at Tennessee Temple, most of the teachers treated the version debate as a non-issue and one of my teachers, Roger Martin, used the NASV in the classroom. To my knowledge, there was only one teacher at Temple in those days who took a stand for the King James Bible on the basis of its Greek text, and that was Bruce Lackey, the Dean of the Bible School. He offered a course on Bible versions but I didn’t take it. I simply was not tuned into the Bible text-version issue at that time. There were some Ruckmanites in the student body who caused a ruckus from time to time and got themselves kicked out of school. They had a habit of speaking disrespectfully to some of the teachers and disrupting the classes, but they didn’t last long and I was glad to see them leave. In fact, a Ruckmanite taught at Temple for a short while. I had him for a course on prophecy, but he was forced to leave part way through the semester. He did not say anything about the Bible version issue in his classes but he was teaching hyper-dispensationalism, and, again, I was glad to see him go.

Anyway, when I graduated from Bible School in 1977 I was unprepared to face the Bible version issue. I still held to the King James Bible, but I didn't know why and I was beginning to have doubts about it. Because of my experiences with the Ruckmanites I was somewhat prejudiced against the defense of the KJV, knowing only their cantankerous approach to the issue.

I will describe an experience that occurred soon after my graduation from Temple that further prejudiced me against a "King James Only" position as defined by Peter Ruckman. When we were on deputation in 1978 to raise support for our missionary work, I gave my testimony at a Camp Meeting at a church in Jacksonville, Florida, describing how the Lord saved me out of a rebellious "hippy" lifestyle. Two young men approached me afterwards and explained that they were the typesetters for a fundamentalist publication called *The Bible Believer's Bulletin* and asked if they could have permission to print my testimony. I wasn't familiar with the publication and readily gave them permission, not knowing that this was Peter Ruckman's own paper. When my testimony was published (beginning on the front page) they sent me a copy and I was amazed and disheartened at the things that I read from Ruckman's strange pen. As far as I can recall, this was the first time that I had actually seen his writings. He was calling men such as Lee Roberson and my teachers at Temple (and anyone else who disagrees with him) names such as "jackass," "poor, dumb, stupid red legs," "silly asses," "apostolic succession of bloated egotists," "two-bit junkie," "two-faced, tin-horned punk," "incredible idiot," "bunch of egotistical jack legs," "conservative asses whose brains have gone to seed," "cheap, two-bit punks," "stupid, little, Bible-rejecting apostates." After we got to the mission field I wrote to Ruckman and told him that I rejected his ungracious, carnal attitude and his cultic approach to the Bible version issue. I told him that I was just a young preacher and that I did not know him personally, but that I suspected that his multiple failed marriages had embittered him. I told him that I was a writer and that I intended to warn others about him, which is exactly what I have done in the years since then.

When I got to the mission field in South Asia in early 1979, I was again confronted with the multiplicity of texts and versions. One of our objectives was to have Bible study materials translated into the indigenous language, but as there were competing translations in that language we had to make a choice.

It was at that point that I began to study the issue of texts and versions for myself and to build a library of materials on this subject. When I began reading the works edited by D.O. Fuller, the works of Edward Hills, etc., I did not automatically believe what they were saying. I jotted down many critical notes and questions in the margin of these books, and I PRAYED EARNESTLY FOR WISDOM.

When I was newly saved and faced with the multiplicity of churches, not knowing which doctrine was correct or what church to join, whether Pentecostal, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc., I took John 7:17 and 8:31-32 to heart and believed that if I would do what these Scriptures commanded I would be led in the truth as these Scriptures promised.

“If any man WILL DO HIS WILL, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:17).

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, IF YE CONTINUE IN MY WORD, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

To know the truth, one must continue in God’s Word and one must be willing to obey what God says.

As I investigated churches and doctrine, I continually searched my heart before God, earnestly desiring to be willing to obey Him in all things and praying that if I was somehow secretly unwilling in some matter that He would reveal this to me and help me to be willing! I searched the Scriptures for hours every day, memorizing, meditating, and trying to apply them to every area of my life. I practically wore out a copy of *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* that first year, learning the meaning of Bible words.

I held on to these promises and I am confident that God led me through the maze of churches and the confusion of doctrine during the early years of my Christian life and that He grounded me in the truth.

When some years later I faced the maze of Bible texts and versions, I went back to these same promises and held on to them as I investigated this issue, and I am convinced that God has led me to the truth.

## **5. My research in this field**

Knowing that the following will doubtless be misconstrued by those who oppose me on this subject and that I will be falsely charged with puffing myself up, I believe I should proceed anyway to describe my research in this field.

The course *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions* and its two companion volumes are the mature fruit of 25 years of labor in this field. I did not choose this subject; it chose me. I have never had the goal of becoming a prominent defender of the King James Bible. I am not a textual critic; I am not a Greek and Hebrew scholar; but from the first time that I began studying this subject I have been fascinated with it and I have been utterly convinced that it is foundational and essential. It was this conviction that motivated me to begin writing on the subject, and it is a conviction that has grown ever deeper through the years. I am as convinced that modern textual criticism is false as I am of anything in life. When I began to learn that the commonly held views on Bible texts and versions are nothing but myths, I simply had to try to tell someone else! Like Jeremiah, the words of God were like a fire within me and I could not keep quiet.

When I first began studying the Bible text-version issue for myself in about 1979, I determined to verify quotes and to cross check every statement to the best of my ability. I wanted to base my research upon primary documents as much as possible. I have pursued that goal over the past quarter century.

Today I have a large private library of materials on this issue, including a large percentage of the books that have been published in this field in English in the past 200 years. To my knowledge, for example, I have practically every history of the Bible that has been published through 2004, including the rarest, such as John Foxe's *Martyrology* (1641), John Lewis' *A Complete History of Translations* (1818), John Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials* (1826), Thomas Fuller's *Church History of Britain* (1837), Christopher Anderson's *Annals of the English Bible* (1845), and the Parker Society's *Writings of Miles Coverdale* (1844) and *Writings of William Tyndale* (1848), to name a few.

My personal library contains roughly 1,000 books and pamphlets dealing directly with the history and text of the Bible and at least that many more volumes that bear on this subject in a more general way from church history and other realms, dating from the 17th century to the present.

I have read 600 books and pamphlets and 2,000 articles touching on this topic and I try to keep abreast of the new research on both sides of the issue.

I have done many weeks of research at libraries and museums such as Regent College in Vancouver, B.C.; Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia; the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville; the British Library; Heritage Baptist University's collection of rare Bibles; the Mack Library at BJU; the Museum of Waldensian History at Torre Pellice, Italy; the Moravian Museums in Pennsylvania and North Carolina; the Scriptorium Center for Biblical Studies in Orlando, Florida; the Cambridge University Library; the Spurgeon Library at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri; Wake-Forest University Library; the Waldensian Museum in Valdesse, North Carolina; the William Tyndale Museum in Vilvoorde, Belgium; the Gutenberg Museum in Germany; and the Erasmus House in Belgium.

I have walked in the footsteps of Bible editors and translators at places such as the Oxford University where Wycliffe and Tyndale and many of the KJV translators were educated and where two of the KJV committees did their work; Cambridge University where many of the other KJV translators were educated and where two of the KJV committees worked; St. Mary the Virgin Church where Wycliffe was condemned for his "heresy" of rejecting transubstantiation; the parish church of Lutterworth where Wycliffe preached; Blackfriars and St. Paul's where Wycliffe was tried; Bartholomew Church where Tyndale was ordained; Little Sodbury Manor where Tyndale lived; St. Adeline's Church where Tyndale preached; Fulham Palace where Tyndale unsuccessfully begged permission to translate the Bible; Vilvoorde, Belgium, where Tyndale was martyred; Hampton Court Palace where King James I agreed to authorize the translation of the King James Bible; Lambeth Palace where Bible readers were

imprisoned in Lollard's Tower; Paul's Cross where Wycliffe and Tyndale Bibles were burned; the Jerusalem Room at Westminster Abbey where parts of the King James Bible were translated; the house in Brussels where Erasmus completed the 3rd edition of his Greek New Testament; the alps of northern Italy where the Waldenses copied their precious handwritten Scriptures during the Dark Ages; and Rome, the headquarters of the ecclesiastical system that for at least 800 years persecuted those who translated and read the Bible.

I have investigated the history of the Bible not only in Great Britain and Europe, but also in the Philippines, Korea, India, Nepal, Macau, Singapore, Burma, and other countries.

I have conducted correspondence with and had personal discussions with published defenders of the King James Bible, including men now deceased such as David Otis Fuller, Bruce Lackey, Marion Reynolds, Bob Steward, and James J. Ray, Bruce Cummons, as well as D.A. Waite, Thomas Strouse, David Sorenson, Ian Paisley, Michael Bates, Clinton Branine, Terence Brown, Perry Rockwood, Jack Moorman, Don Jasmin, Ken Johnson, D.K. Madden, Michael Maynard, Peter van Kleeck, Cecil Carter, Denis Gibson, Chuck Nichols, Charles Turner, Bob Barnett, Kirk DiVietro, Timothy Tow, and Jeffrey Khoo, to name a few. I only regret that I did not begin my research a little earlier, so that I could have communicated personally with Dr. Edward F. Hills, probably my favorite author on this subject. By the time I learned about him and attempted to contact him in about 1980 his widow informed me that he was in Glory.

I am thankful for these men and have learned so much from them. I am continually amazed at how the Lord gives fresh insight to men who are committed to His Word. Many of these men have broken new ground in this field of research. Edward Hills broke new ground with his believing approach to the textual issue and with his understanding of the intimate association between theological modernism and modern textual criticism. Terence Brown broke new ground by writing insightful articles on this subject when few others understood its importance, articles that vastly increased the understanding of God's people in this field. D.O. Fuller broke new ground by reprinting some of the important 19th century works defending the Received Text and the King James Bible and for introducing John Burgon to a new generation. Everett Fowler broke new ground with his minute analysis of the differences between the texts and versions. D.A. Waite broke new ground with his effective four-fold defense of the KJV and with the massive number of studies he has published on this subject. Jack Moorman broke new ground with his excellent research into the history of the text, among other things. Thomas Strouse broke new ground with his believing approach to the reception and canonization of the Scripture. Michael Maynard broke new ground in the defense of 1 John 5:7-8. Many others could be mentioned.

I have published the following books on the Bible version issue, in addition to roughly 100 articles. The three new books that we are publishing in 2005 are, in many ways, a maturing of the research that first appeared in the older books.

*Unholy Hands on God's Holy Book: A Report on the United Bible Societies* (1985)  
*Myths about Modern Bible Versions* (first as a series of booklets in 1986 and then as a single volume beginning in 1999)  
*A Most Frightful Deception: The Good News Bible and Translator Robert Bratcher* (1986)  
*Examining the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text* (1989)  
*Dynamic Equivalency: Death Knell of Pure Scripture* (1990)  
*Wycliffe Bible Translators: Whither Bound?* (1991)  
*Living Bible: Blessing or Curse?* (1991)  
*A Tribute to David Otis Fuller* (1992)  
*Modern Bible Versions* (1994)  
*What about Ruckman?* (1994)  
*For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the Authorized Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present* (1995)  
*Modern Versions Founded upon Apostasy: The Theology of the Men who Developed the Modern Textual Theories* (1995)  
*Rome and the Bible: The History of the Bible through the Centuries and Rome's Persecutions against It* (1996)  
*Answering James White's "The King James Only Controversy"* (1998)  
*Testimonies of King James Bible Defenders* (2000)

I don't say these things to puff myself up in the eyes of men, the Lord being my witness. I am listing my credentials for one reason only, and that is to encourage my readers that I have applied myself diligently to this subject and have made every effort to get my facts right. I understand all too well that the research of KJV defenders is widely belittled and ridiculed by those who think of themselves as the sole keepers of scholarship.

**6. Please understand that you do not have to prove your position on this issue to the satisfaction of the defender of the modern versions; you only have to prove it to your own satisfaction before God in light of His Word.** Further, you are not required to answer every question a critic of your position can ask. No one can answer all of the questions that can be asked on any side of this issue.



# A LEXICON ON THE BIBLE TEXT-VERSION ISSUE

ALEPH CODEX. See Sinaiticus.

ALEXANDRIAN TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

BYZANTINE TEXT. See Received Text.

CHURCH FATHERS. The term “church fathers” refers to church leaders of the first seven centuries after the apostles whose writings have been preserved. They are grouped into four divisions: *Apostolic Fathers* (second century), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (second and third centuries), *Nicene Fathers* (fourth century), and *Post-Nicene Fathers* (fifth century). Nicene refers to the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 that dealt with the problem of Arianism and affirmed the doctrine of Christ’s deity. To apply the term “church fathers” to these post-apostolic men is an inaccurate Roman Catholic concept that was borrowed by Protestants and evangelicals. Most of the “church fathers” were laden down with heresies and were more the fathers of the false Roman Catholic Church than the fathers of the apostolic churches. The only genuine “church fathers” are the apostles who delivered by divine inspiration the “faith ONCE delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

CODEX. A codex is a manuscript bound in the manner of a book rather than a scroll.

CODEX SINAITICUS. See Sinaiticus.

CODEX VATICANUS. See Vaticanus.

CRITICAL TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

EGYPTIAN TEXT. See Westcott-Hort Text.

GNOSTICISM. Gnosticism refers to a doctrine of salvation through a secret knowledge of divine things. The Greek word “gnosis” means knowledge. Gnosticism is a general term that encompasses a wide variety of heresy, held both by non-Christians and by those who professed Christ. Gnosticism was developed by non-Christians who borrowed from Greek philosophy, Judaism, and Oriental mysticism. Elements of Gnosticism were then borrowed by professing Christians, who inter-mingled Gnostic thought with New Testament teaching.

KOINE. See Received Text

LECTIONARY. A lectionary is a collection of Scriptures used in worship services, some weekly and some for special occasions such as Easter. There are about 2,143 pre-Reformation Greek lectionaries extant.

LATIN, OLD. Old Latin is so called because it predated the Jerome Latin Vulgate of the early 5th century. It was likely first translated from Greek in roughly 157 A.D. We only know a little about the Old Latin. There are no entire Old Latin New Testaments in existence, only about 60 fragments, dating from the 4th to the 13th centuries (the books of Jude and 2nd and 3rd John are missing entirely). In addition there are quotations of Old Latin from ancient church leaders. There is a significant difference between the Old Latin in the West and the Old Latin in Africa, with the western Old Latin being closer to the Traditional Reformation Text. The Old Latin continued to be used by Christians separated from Rome, particularly the Waldenses and Albigenses, until the 13th century.

LATIN, VULGATE. Vulgate means common and the Latin vulgate was the Bible commonly used by the Roman Catholic Church. It is supposed to have been made by Jerome in the early 5th century, but it was not standardized or officially adopted until the 16th century. With some textual variety, the Latin was translated into many languages by separatist Bible believers, such as Waldenses, Lollards, Hussites, and Anabaptists.

MAJORITY TEXT. See Received Text.

MAJUSCULE. See Uncial.

MINUSCULE. The minuscule Greek manuscripts (also called cursives) are those written in small letters (as opposed to all caps in the uncials). This method of the production of books began in the early 9th century. There are about 2,812 minuscules extant, dating from the 9th to the 16th century.

MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM. The modern “science” of attempting to recover the original text of an ancient document.

NESTLE’S TEXT. The Nestle’s Greek New Testament was developed by Eberhard Nestle and first published in 1895. It was based on the Greek New Testaments published by Tischendorf (8th edition), Westcott and Hort, and D. Bernhard Weiss. Since Tischendorf preferred the Sinaiticus and Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus, the Nestle Text is founded largely upon the witness of these two manuscripts. The Nestle’s Text has gone through 27 editions and has been widely used in Bible College and seminary classrooms and translation work. Eberhard’s son Erwin succeeded to the editorship of the Nestle Text after Eberhard’s death in 1913, and in 1950 Kurt Aland became associated with the Nestle project and later editions of the Nestle’s Text are called the *Nestle-Aland* Text.

OLD LATIN. See Latin, Old.

PAPYRUS. Papyrus manuscripts were made from the papyrus plant that grew alongside rivers in Egypt (and a few other places). Papyrus was used from the 1st to the 10th centuries. The earliest extant N.T. manuscripts were written on papyrus. 116 papyri are listed in the apparatus of the 4th UBS Greek New Testament.

PARCHMENT. Writing material made of animal skins. A good portion of the N.T. would require about 60 sheep or goats. (The entire Gutenberg Bible required the skins of 191 calves.)

PESHITTA. The Peshitta is a translation of the New Testament into Syriac. It was thus from Syria, the home of the famous missionary church at Antioch (Acts 13). In spite of the attempt by modern textual critics to give it a later date, we are convinced that it is very ancient, perhaps going back to the time of the apostles. The Syrian Orthodox churches still use the Peshitta, even in some parts of southern India, and according to their tradition, the Peshitta was actually translated by Mark or Jude. The Peshitta generally represents the Traditional Reformation Text.

RECEIVED GREEK TEXT. This is the Greek text that was printed during the Protestant Reformation era and used for all of the popular Protestant versions from the 16th to the late 19th centuries. It is also called the *MAJORITY TEXT*, because in most points it represents the vast majority of the more than 5,400 existing Greek manuscripts; the *TRADITIONAL TEXT*, because it represents the text traditionally used in the churches; the *COMMON TEXT*, because it represents the text commonly found in the New Testament manuscripts; the *BYZANTINE TEXT*, because it was preserved in the Greek Byzantine Empire; the *CONSTANTINOPOLIAN TEXT*, because Constantinople was the capital of the Byzantine Empire; the *ANTIOCHIAN TEXT* or the *SYRIAN TEXT*, because it was that form of New Testament text preserved in Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria, which, of course, is where the great missionary church was located (Acts 13:1-4); and the *KOINE TEXT*, because it was written in a more common style of Greek in contrast to the classical style.

SINAITICUS. The Sinaiticus is a Greek uncial codex that was discovered in 1844 by Constantine von Tischendorf in St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai. It is thought to date to the 4th century and to have come from Egypt. The Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, being the two most ancient Greek uncials, are preferred by modern textual critics over the vast majority of surviving manuscripts. The translators of the New International Version, for example, call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus "the two most reliable early manuscripts" (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).

TEXTUAL CRITICISM. See Modern Textual Criticism.

TRADITIONAL TEXT. See Received Text.

UNCIAL. The uncial Greek manuscripts are those written in all caps. The word "uncial" means capital. They are also called majuscules. They began to be replaced with the minuscules in the

early 9th century. There are about 263 uncials extant. The three oldest complete (or nearly complete) are B (Codex Vaticanus), Aleph (Codex Sinaiticus), and A (Codex Alexandrinus). Others from the first six centuries are D (Codex Bezae, containing the Gospels and Acts), W (containing the Gospels), and D2 (containing the Pauline Epistles).

VATICANUS. The Vaticanus is a Greek uncial codex that was discovered in the Vatican Library in 1475. It is thought to date from the mid-4th century and to have originated in Egypt. The Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, being the two most ancient Greek uncials with large portions intact, are preferred by modern textual critics over the vast majority of surviving manuscripts. The translators of the New International Version, for example, call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus “the two most reliable early manuscripts” (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).

VELLUM. Writing material made of animal skins.

VULGATE, LATIN. See Latin Vulgate.

WESTCOTT-HORT GREEK TEXT. This is the first popular edition of the critical Greek New Testament created through the bogus “science” of modern textual criticism. It leans heavily upon the text found in the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus, which are two ancient Egyptian manuscripts that contain the Alexandrian Text. It is also called THE EGYPTIAN TEXT and THE CRITICAL TEXT. Though the Nestles and the United Bible Societies Greek texts claim to be “eclectic,” the fact is that they are almost identical to the W-H text of 1881 *in significant departures from the Received Text and in passages that have extensive doctrinal significance*. Jack Moorman counted only 216 instances in which the Nestle-Aland 26th edition apparatus departs from the Vaticanus and Aleph. The W-H and the UBS delete or question almost the same number of verses (WH--48, UBS--45), the same number of significant portions of verses (WH--193, UBS 185), and the same number of names and titles of the Lord (WH--221, UBS--212).

# WHY WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE

## Volume 1

- I. We hold to the KJV because of the doctrine of divine preservation.
  - A. The KJV is based on the preserved Greek New Testament.
  - B. The KJV is based on the preserved Hebrew Old Testament.
- II. We hold to the KJV because the theories supporting the Modern Greek text are heretical.
- III. We hold to the KJV because the modern texts and versions are the product of end-time apostasy.
- IV. We hold to the KJV because of its superior doctrine.

## Volume 2

- V. We hold to the KJV because of its unmatched heritage.
- VI. We hold to the KJV because the modern versions are built upon a foundation of deception.
- VII. We hold to the KJV because evangelical scholarship is unreliable.
- VIII. We hold to the KJV because we reject dynamic equivalency.
- IX. We hold to the KJV because we reject the “Majority Text” position.
- X. We hold to the KJV because of the evil fruit of the modern versions.

## I. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION.

### Section Summary

- 1. Introductory Points
- 2. A survey of the doctrine of Bible Preservation
- 3. A summary of the doctrine of Bible Preservation

### Introductory Points

1. *I cannot emphasize too strongly how important the doctrine of biblical preservation is to the issue of Bible texts and versions.* This doctrine is absolutely foundational to the issue, and in this light we will see how wrongheaded the principles of modern textual criticism are at their very root. I know of only one textbook on modern textual criticism written in the past 75 years by a “qualified” textual critic that is *predicated upon* divine inspiration and preservation. The one exception is Dr. Edward F. Hills’ *The King James Version Defended*, and the field of modern textual criticism at large has given Hills no recognition beyond a cursory dismissal.

2. Consider what the Bible says about faith.

- a. The Bible warns that “without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please” God (Heb. 11:6) and “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).
- b. Faith is based *only* upon the testimony of the Scriptures. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17).
- c. Faith is “the evidence of things NOT SEEN” (Heb. 11:1). Faith is the opposite of seeing (Rom. 8:24). God teaches us to “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7) and to “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen” (2 Cor. 4:18).

3. Consider some important statements on this by men who understood the necessity of faith:

“If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883).

“We have a clear choice between one of two diverging pathways, the road of faith or the road of human reason and unbelief. Do we begin with the Word of God or do we begin with the word of men? This is the question and it has in the first instance little to do with texts, but with the faithfulness of our God. To decide these things we need only a believing heart and the ability to read. Of course, textual scholars will deem all non-academics meddling in what they regard as their exclusive area of work unworthy to tie their bootlaces, still less to steal their clothes! ... For it to be of any use, textual study must be grounded upon what the Bible already says about itself. IF WE DO NOT BEGIN WITH THE WORD OF GOD, WE SHALL NEVER END WITH IT!” (David W. Norris, *The Big Picture*).

“FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 1).

4. To understand the doctrine of preservation we must understand the nature of revelation in the Bible, that it is a gradual unfolding of doctrine. To interpret the Bible’s doctrine accurately and

fully, the student must compare Scripture with Scripture, must compare the Old with the New. The more general statements on preservation in the Old Testament are complimented by the more amazingly specific statements of the New.

5. It is also important to understand that the doctrine of preservation has never been under attack as it is in these last days and God's people have not before seen the need to define this doctrine as clearly as it needs to be defined today. Doctrine has often been developed throughout church history in reaction to heretical assaults. The doctrine of Christ's deity and the Trinity, for example, were developed during the assaults by Gnostics, Arians, and other heretics of the early centuries, and were further refined during the Unitarian assaults of the 18th and 19th centuries. I am convinced that old commentaries such as Matthew Henry's dealt little with the doctrine of preservation because while it was something that was commonly accepted it was not well thought out, having not been under serious attack. I believe the doctrine of biblical preservation is being more clearly developed and defined today because of the assault of modern textual criticism.

## **A SURVEY OF THE DOCTRINE OF BIBLE PRESERVATION**

Since we cannot please God apart from faith and since faith comes by hearing the Word of God, we must begin our course by examining the Bible's teaching on preservation. Does God promise to preserve the Scriptures? To what extent does He promise to preserve them? Is this promise taught explicitly and plainly or is it only implied or hinted at? Does the Bible tell us anything about *how* the Scriptures will be preserved? Please give careful attention to the following, because this survey of the Bible's doctrine of preservation is the most important part of the course on Bible texts and versions. The Bible challenges the believer to "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21), and that is what we invite each student to do with the following study. Consider our statements prayerfully and test them with the Scriptures and see if we are being faithful to the Word of God.

### **Deuteronomy 31:24-26; 17:18; Romans 3:1-2**

"And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31:24-26).

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites" (Deut. 17:18).

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1-2).

1. It was to the Jews that God assigned the task of preserving the Hebrew Old Testament (Rom. 3:1-2). In Romans 3 Paul describes the Old Testament as the very “oracles of God,” and these oracles were committed to the Jews. This refutes every theory of inspiration that claims that the Old Testament Scriptures are *anything less* than the very infallible words of God. Even though the Jews did not always obey the Scriptures, they held them in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God.

2. In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were responsible to care for the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18).

3. Though there were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown among the Jews (2 Chron. 15:3), God preserved His Word in spite of man’s failure. The Word of God was never permanently lost (2 Kings 22:8).

4. There were highpoints to the process of preservation during that era, times of spiritual revival, in which more careful attention was given to the Scriptures and any errors that might have crept in through neglect were corrected. (The same thing has occurred in the church era, as we will see.)

- a. One of the highpoints in the transmission of the Old Testament text was the revival during the days of King Hezekiah. It was at this time, for example, that men copied out Solomon’s proverbs (Prov. 25:1).
- b. There were other revivals during the days of Jehoshaphat and Josiah and doubtless these were also times in which the Scriptures were given special attention and the process of canonization and preservation continued.
- c. After the Babylonian captivity there was a revival within the Jewish priesthood (Ezra 7:10) and the Old Testament Scriptures continued to be preserved. “By Ezra and his successors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the Old Testament books were gathered together into one Old Testament canon, and their texts were purged of errors and preserved until the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry. By that time the Old Testament text was so firmly established that even the Jews’ rejection of Christ could not disturb it” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, 4th edition, p. 93).
- d. A great high point in the preservation of the Old Testament was the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. He exalted the Old Testament Hebrew text and guaranteed its preservation even to the very jots and tittles (Mat. 4:4; 5:18). The fact that Christ spoke of jots and tittles teaches us that He used and exalted the Hebrew text and not any alleged Greek translation thereof. Christ also referred to the Old Testament by its Hebrew division rather than by the Greek division (Lk. 24:44). The Hebrew division was the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, whereas the Greek division was



the same as it is in English, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. Further, when the Lord Jesus Christ referred to the first and last prophets that were martyred in the Old Testament, He referred to them by the order of the Hebrew Text rather than by the order of the Greek Septuagint (Mat. 23:35). The Hebrew Old Testament begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles, whereas the Greek Septuagint ends with the prophet Malachi followed by the apocryphal books.

5. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and the further scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, it was the scribes called *Tannaim* (Teachers) who guarded the Old Testament Scriptures. These were followed by the *Amoraim* (Expositors). Though they did not believe the Bible, they revered it and continue to preserve it from generation to generation.

6. Beginning in the sixth century it was the Masoretes who jealously guarded the Hebrew text and passed it down from generation to generation from about 500 to 1000 A.D. The Masoretes were families of Hebrew scholars who had centers in Tiberius, Palestine, and Babylon. The traditional Hebrew Masoretic text gets its name from these scholars. The Masoretes exercised great care in transcribing the Old Testament. Following are some of their stringent rules (from Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 1937):

- a. No word nor letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
- b. Strict rules were given concerning forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words, and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
- c. The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. If three mistakes were found on any page, the entire manuscript was condemned.
- d. Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once.

### **Psalm 12:6-7**

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

1. This passage teaches that the Scriptures are both *inspired* by God (v. 6) and *preserved* by God (v. 7). Note that the inspiration is in “words” rather than in general thoughts or ideas.
2. To pair the doctrines of inspiration and preservation makes perfect sense and is agreeable with God’s revealed character and purpose. Why would God go to such trouble to verbally inspire the

Scripture only to allow it to be corrupted through the process of time or to be preserved in a general sense?

3. Those who support the modern versions commonly deny that Psalm 12:7 has any association to Bible preservation, claiming that it describes only the preservation of God's people not God's words. These argue that the gender difference between "them" in verse 7 (which is masculine) and "words" of verse 6 (which is feminine) requires that we look for a masculine pronoun to fit "them." Their conclusion is that we must leap over verse 6 to the feminine "poor" in verse 5. For the following reasons we are convinced that this view is wrong and that Psalm 12:7 refers to the preservation of God's words *AS WELL AS TO* the preservation of God's people:

a. The rule of proximity requires that the antecedent of "them" in v. 7 be the "words" of verse 6.

b. There is an accepted rule of gender discordance in the Psalms. "It is not uncommon, especially in the Psalter, for feminine plural noun synonyms for the 'words' of the Lord to be the antecedent for masculine plural pronouns/pronominal suffixes, which seem to 'masculinize' the verbal extension of the patriarchal God of the Old Testament" (Thomas Strouse, April 2001, Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary). Following are examples:

Psalm 119:111 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "they."

Psalm 119:129 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

Psalm 119:152 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

Psalm 119:167 -- the feminine "testimonies" is the antecedent for the masculine "them."

c. In the context of Psalm 12, the words of men are contrasted with the words of God. This favors the view that verse 7 has God's words in view.

d. Some of the Reformers of the 16th to the 18th centuries interpreted Psalm 12:7 as the preservation of words. Consider two examples:

Henry Ainsworth wrote in 1626 that Psalm 12:7 refers to the preservation of God's Word. "Briggs commends Ainsworth as the 'prince of Puritan commentators' and that his commentary on the Psalms is a 'monument of learning.'" ... Ainsworth states that 'the sayings' [of Psalm 12:7] are 'words' or 'promises' that are 'tried' or 'examined' 'as in a fire.' He cross references the reader to Psalm 18:31; 119:140; and Proverbs 30:5, each reference having to do with the purity of the word" (Peter Van Kleeck).

John Wesley in the 18th century said, “*Thou shalt keep them*--Thy words or promises...”

4. There is an ambiguity in the Hebrew text so that it is probable that Psalm 12:7 refers *both* to God’s words and to God’s people. (The following examples of biblical scholars who have held this position are from Peter Van Kleeck’s unpublished thesis *The Genius of Ambiguity--The Translational and Exegetical Rendering of Psalm 12:7 Primarily Considered in the Churchly Tradition of the 16th And 17th Centuries and Its Expression in the Reformation English Bibles*. This report was completed in the process of the pursuit of an M.A.R. at Calvin Theological Seminary.)

Martin Luther applied Psalm 12:7 both to God’s people and to God’s words. “Following the arrangement of this Psalm, Luther penned a hymn, two stanzas of which reflect his understanding of verse 6 and 7: ... ‘Thy truth thou wilt preserve, O Lord, from this vile generation...’ In poetic form, Luther grasps the significance of this verse both for the preservation of those who are oppressed and for the Word of God. The two-pronged significance of this interpretation to both people and God’s words in Luther’s Psalter was to have wide-ranging significance in the English Bible tradition” (Peter Van Kleeck).

Myles Coverdale in the Coverdale Bible (1535) translated Psalm 12:7 to refer both to the words of God and to the people of God -- “Keep them therefore (O Lord) and preserve us from this generation for ever.” “With the absence of ‘Thou shalt’ to begin verse 7, there is a direct connection between ‘words’ and ‘keep them.’ In the first clause, Coverdale intended the words to be kept; in the second clause people are in view...” (Van Kleeck).

John Rogers in the Matthew’s Bible (1537) followed Coverdale. In a marginal note he observed that two of the greatest rabbinical Hebrew scholars differed on the interpretation of “them” in Ps. 12:7, one believing it refers to God’s words; the other believing that it refers to God’s people.

John Calvin, while himself preferring the interpretation that Psalm 12:7 refers to the keeping of God’s people, admitted, “Some give this exposition of the passage, Thou wilt keep them, namely, thy words...” Thus, Calvin acknowledged that there was a division among Bible scholars in his day, some believing Psalm 12:7 refers to words with others believing it refers to people.

The Third Part of the Bible (1550) takes the same position. “Taken from Becke’s text of 1549 this edition of the scriptures contains the Psalter, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. ... In verse 7 there is a note at ‘them’ which states, ‘some understand here certain men, some others word.’ Again, the translators and exegetes

allowed breadth of interpretation of ‘them’ to include people and words” (Van Kleeck).

The Geneva Bible (1560) also applies Psalm 12:7 both to God’s people and God’s words. The text reads, “The words of the Lord are pure words, as the silver, tried in a furnace of earth, fined seven fold. Thou wilt keep them, O Lord: Thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever.” The margin reads, “Because the Lord’s word and promise is true and unchangeable, he will perform it and preserve the poor from this wicked generation.”

Matthew Poole, in his 1685 commentary on Psalms, had this note at Psalm 12:7, “Thou shalt keep them; either, 1. The poor and needy, ver. 5 ... Or, 2. Thy words or promises last mentioned, ver. 6...”

5. The King James Bible, with its faithful translation of the Hebrew, allows for both of these applications. The modern versions, on the other hand, have entirely shut out the doctrine of the preservation of God’s Word in this passage by substituting a translation from the Greek and Latin. “By so doing, the editors of these translations have endorsed one exegetical tradition, the Greek- Latin, to the exclusion of the other, the Hebraic, and by doing so have censured any further debate within the Hebrew exegetical tradition itself” (Peter Van Kleeck).

KJV -- “Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

RSV -- “Do thou, O LORD, protect us, guard us ever from this generation.”

NRSV -- “You O Lord, will protect us; you will guard us from this generation forever.”

NIV -- “O Lord, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.”

NRSV -- “You O Lord, will protect us; you will guard us from this generation forever.”

### **Psalm 33:11**

“The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

This is a plain statement of preservation, as (comparing Scripture with Scripture) we know that the Lord’s counsel and His thoughts are revealed to man in the Scriptures. The very “mind of Christ” is contained in the Scripture as revealed by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:10-16). This mind is revealed in divinely chosen “words” (v. 13).

### **Psalm 100:5**

“For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

1. The preservation of Scripture is associated with God’s goodness and mercy. It is because God loves men that He has given them His infallible Revelation and keeps it for them.

2. This verse plainly teaches that God's truth endures to all generations. This could refer to truth in a general sense, except that we know from other Scriptures that God's truth was imparted in words rather than in general thoughts. As the Lord Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (Jn. 17:17). Thus, comparing Scripture with Scripture we know that it is the truth of God as expressed by the words of God that will endure to all generations.

### **Psalm 105:8-10**

"He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant."

1. This is a clear statement that God intends to keep His words. The term "a thousand generations" refers to eternity. "If we assume a generation to represent thirty years, thirty thousand years are then in view. That is considerably longer than recorded history. The likely thought rather is a metaphor referring to forever" (David Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 54). The metaphor also emphasizes the generation to generation aspect of eternal. Not only is God's inscripturated covenant eternally sure, it is also sure throughout the earthly generations.

2. The covenant referred to here is the one given to Abraham and affirmed to his children, but the New Testament teaches us that believers today participate in that same covenant (Rom. 4:12-16). It also refers to the covenant given in the law. These are covenants that are written down in Scripture by divine inspiration. Thus the promise that it will be preserved to a thousand generations applies to the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments.

### **Psalm 111:7-8**

"The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness."

1. This is a plain statement that the Scripture is preserved. God's commandments stand fast forever and ever because that is their character. They are "sure." They are the living words of Almighty God.

2. This preservation extends to "all his commandments." God has not promised to preserve the Scripture merely in a general sense but in the sense of its individual commandments, its smallest parts. Our modern Bibles have divided the commandments of the Lord into individual verses.

### **Psalm 117:2**

"For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD."

1. This is a plain statement that the Scriptures are preserved. The truth of the Lord is found in the Scripture (Ps. 119:142; Jn. 17:17).

2. Note that the preservation of Scripture is associated with God's mercy toward men. Sinful man does not deserve to have God's truth; it is only because of God's mercy that God reveals and keeps His truth for men.

3. Preservation of Scripture is a cause for praise. In fact, we could know nothing for certain about God and His salvation today if it were not for the fact that the Scripture has been carefully preserved.

### **Psalm 119:89, 152, 160**

“For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” (v. 89)

“Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.” (v. 152)

“Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.” (v. 160)

1. The combined testimony of these three Scriptures in Psalm 119 is very important, teaching that God's Word is settled both in heaven and on earth.

2. The Word of God was settled in the eternal plan of God. Other references to the pre-existence of the Word of God are found in Isa. 6:6; Dan. 10:21; John 8:26, 28; 17:8. The Bible is an eternal, supernatural book from beginning to end. John Wycliffe believed that the Scripture was “a divine exemplar conceived in the mind of God before creation, and before the material Scriptures were written down” (quoted from Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 1998, p. 230). This is the testimony of Psalm 119:89: “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.”

a. *God foreknew the languages of Scripture* and “worked providentially to develop the Hebrew and Greek tongues into fit vehicles for the conveyance of His saving message.” Hence “in the writing of the Scriptures the Holy Spirit did not have to struggle, as modernists insist, with the limitations of human language” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 90).

(1) God is the author of human language, having created Adam with the ability to communicate with Himself from the beginning (Gen. 2:15-20).

(2) The Scripture, written in providentially developed human language, is capable of imparting the “deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10).

b. *God foreknew the individual words of Scripture.* Each word in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek was weighed and selected in the eternal council of the Almighty (Ps. 12:6). A good translation will therefore take each word into account.

c. *God foreknew the times in which the Scripture was written* (Dan. 2:21). He created the times to fit the Scripture and the Scripture to fit the times. “When God designed the holy Scriptures in eternity, He had the whole sweep of human history in view. Hence the Scriptures are forever relevant” (Hills, p. 90). Thus the cultural context of the Scripture is an integral part of the divine Revelation and cannot be modified in a “dynamic equivalency” fashion. The Bible must be translated accurately and then explained through the teaching process.

3. When God gave the Scriptures, He intended to guard and preserve them; they are “founded forever” (v. 152). All of the demons in Satan’s army and all of the heretics of all ages and all of the unbelief or carelessness of man cannot thwart even one of God’s testimonies. As these activities are allowed within the plan and purpose of God, they can result in the corruption of some biblical manuscripts and some translations on some occasions, but they cannot result in the permanent corruption of God’s words.

4. God’s people have always had a confidence in the divine preservation of Scripture (“I have known of old...” v. 152). This was true historically until the rise of modern biblical criticism. Prior to that, the saints testified of their faith in divine preservation in their confessions. An example is the Westminster Confession of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentic; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

5. The Psalmist promises that God will preserve both His Word and His words (v. 160). The first part of the verse refers to the Word of God as a whole, whereas the second part refers to the parts of God’s Word, the individual judgments, the books, chapters, verses, and words.

### **Proverbs 30:5-6**

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

1. Both the inspiration and preservation of God’s Word are in view in this passage. Verse 5 refers to the infallible verbal inspiration. Verse 6 refers to preservation in two ways: First, it shows that God is jealous for His words and does not merely commit them upon the uncertain

seas of human history. Second, it assumes that God's words will be available. Otherwise, how would it be possible for men to tamper with them?

2. Verse 6 also teaches that men are allowed certain freedom to exercise their will and to attack God's Word. History holds many examples of this. It occurred widely in the 2nd to the 4th centuries after the apostles and is still occurring today. In recent times skeptics have tampered with the Greek New Testament, the Hebrew Old Testament, and with the translations thereof.

3. In spite of man's wicked efforts, God has jealously guarded His Word. He judges those who tamper with it ("lest he reprove thee") and grants wisdom to His people to reject the corruptions so that the pure Word of God always wins out over the process of time. We see this throughout the church age. Because of the widespread attacks by heretics in the 2nd and 3rd centuries, many Greek manuscripts and translations were corrupted. As time passed, these were rejected by Christians in general and the pure Word of God won out and was found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations. "Thus during the 4th and 5th centuries among the Syriac-speaking Christians of the East, the Greek-speaking Christians of the Byzantine empire, and the Latin-speaking Christians of the West *the same tendency was at work, namely, a God-guided trend away from the false Western and Alexandrian texts and toward the True Traditional Text*" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 188). Thus, corrupt manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus were literally put on a shelf or hidden in the sands of Egypt and were not used. Yea, it is to this very factor that they owe their preservation.

4. In this passage, as in Psalm 12:6-7, God associates the protection and preservation of His people with that of His Word. There is an intimate connection here, because *the method by which God has preserved the Scripture is its usage among the saints*. Those who are begotten of the Word (1 Pet. 1:23) and live by the Word (Matt. 4:4) love and guard the Word even unto death, and this is exactly what we see in church history. For example, in Britain during the days when Rome ruled, the Scripture was preserved at great cost by the Lollards and other "dissidents" who cherished the Wycliffe Bible and later the Tyndale Bible unto death.

### **Isaiah 40:8**

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

1. Here the Word of God is contrasted with flowers. Flowers are intricate and beautiful, but they soon fade away. Not so the Word of God. While it is more intricate and lovely than any flower, it does not wither or fade; it stands forever, for the reason that it is in character God's very Word and He jealously guards it. A plainer statement of biblical preservation could not be made.

2. The context of Isaiah 40:8 is the coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom. In this context, Isaiah promises that nothing shall fail of divine prophecy; not only will the prophecies stand by being fulfilled but they will also stand by the preservation of the very jots



and titles of the Scripture record (Mat. 5:18). We live 2,700 years after Isaiah wrote. We live down toward the end of the church age, near the time of Christ's return. And we can testify that the Word of God still stands, that all of the inscripturated prophecies are perfectly intact in the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Received Greek New Testament and in the accurate translations thereof such as the King James Bible, and they patiently await fulfillment as they continue to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Isaiah 55:11**

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

1. Here we are reminded that God does not merely send out His word and then leave it to man to determine what happens. He does not launch His word upon human history and stand back to see what will come of it. He is intimately involved, thus guaranteeing its success.
2. This has a direct application to the preservation of Scripture. The word that has gone forth from God's mouth is found in the 66 books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures and in the individual words thereof.
3. Though God allows men to reject His word and even attack it, as heretics have done through the centuries, and though these attacks have introduced corruption and spiritual confusion into the biblical record, it is impossible that man can destroy, stop, or permanently corrupt God's words.
4. The grand design of God's word is the revelation of Jesus Christ (Lk. 24:44), the salvation of souls (Lk. 19:10), the worldwide preaching of the gospel and the establishment of New Testament churches (Mat. 28:18-20), and eventually the setting up of Christ's kingdom on earth for a thousand years followed by the establishment of the New Heaven and the New Earth (Rev. 20-22). All of this will be accomplished and the Scriptures that describe and carry out this glorious plan are divinely preserved.

### **Isaiah 59:20-21**

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."

1. The preservation of Scripture is a solemn covenant God has made with believers ("them that turn from transgression in Jacob" v. 20). "This is the great and comprehensive promise of that

covenant, that God will give and continue his word and Spirit to his church and people throughout all generations” (Matthew Henry). The covenant applies, of course, to all believers who are the seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:16-17; Gal. 3:7).

2. A clearer statement of preservation could not be made.

- a. The promise pertains to the words of God. We know that these words are found in the Scripture and nowhere else (2 Tim. 3:16).
- b. The promise applies particularly to the New Testament. Isaiah is describing the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer. When he says in verse 21, “My spirit that is upon THEE, and my words which I have put in THY mouth,” he is referring to the Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke the words of God and through His spirit authored the New Testament (Jn. 16:12-13). The words of salvation “at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb. 2:3).
- c. The *means* of preservation is described.
  - (1) Preservation is accomplished through the people of God (“my words ... shall not depart out of ... the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed...”). Man has an important role in the preservation of God’s words. In the New Testament dispensation, it is the believing churches that preserve the Scripture (Mat. 28:19-20). Isaiah foresaw this process and described it as God’s words being retained in the mouth of God’s believing people from generation to generation. Thus, Matthew Henry observes, “...so it is a promise of the continuance and perpetuity of the church in the world to the end of time, parallel to those promises that the throne and seed of Christ shall endure for ever.” When we look for the preserved Scripture we must look for it as it is kept and obeyed among God’s people, not hidden away somewhere. This is precisely where the Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries looked when the Greek New Testament was first printed and translations made thereof. They printed the text commonly received by God’s people through the centuries and they rejected manuscripts such as the Vaticanus that had been rejected in early centuries and never widely used.
  - (2) Preservation is accomplished by the Spirit of God (“My spirit...”). Though man has an important part in the preservation of Scripture, he is too weak and his earthly life too brief to keep the words of God. Preservation is accomplished by God’s Spirit. The fact that standard contemporary works on biblical textual criticism do not even mention the Spirit of God exposes their gross deficiency.
- d. The promise extends from generation to generation forever, thus extending throughout the church age and beyond.

## **Jeremiah 26:2**

“Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:”

1. God’s instructions to the prophet Jeremiah tell us how important the WORDS of the Scripture are before God. God’s message to mankind is not given in general ideas but in the very words. The Scripture is verbally inspired. All of the words are important and each and every word is important.

2. Note how zealous God’s people are to be for each one of God’s words. With this in mind, consider how lightly the modern version defenders dismiss thousands of words that are omitted and changed in the critical Greek text. Even if only one word were omitted or changed, that one word *should* be the cause of great alarm. An example is that most important word “God” which is removed from 1 Timothy 3:16.

## **Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4**

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Mat. 4:4).

“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4).

1. These verses are a powerful witness to the divine preservation of Scripture. In defeating the Devil, the Lord Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to teach that the words of God are part of man’s necessary sustenance.

2. Note that it is not merely the word of God in general by which man lives; it is “by every word” that he lives.

3. Jesus taught that the Scripture is living and abiding and preserved. The phrase “it is written” is in the perfect tense, “meaning it has been written in the past and stands written now, preserved until the present time” (D.A. Waite).

4. The importance of this statement is emphasized by being repeated two times in the Gospels and three times altogether in Scripture. Biblical repetition is for emphasis. See Gen. 41:32, where God’s dream was repeated to Pharaoh to emphasize its certainty. The modern versions omit “but by every word of God” from Luke 4:4, but the “authority” for this serious omission is a mere four Alexandrian uncials and one minuscule. Standing at the head of this handful of manuscripts we find Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, which John Burgon called “two false witnesses.”

### **Matthew 5:18**

“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”

1. The Lord Jesus was emphatic about the preservation of God’s Word. Even the smallest details are preserved. This can only be accomplished by God’s providential intervention in the Bible’s transmission through the centuries.

2. In particular, Christ is referring to the Old Testament Hebrew text. It is the Hebrew language that has jots and tittles. Modern textual critics exalt the so-called Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament, even claiming that Christ and the apostles used and quoted from it and even using it to correct the Hebrew Masoretic text, but the Greek language does not have jots and tittles so Christ could not have been referring to the preservation the Old Testament in Greek.

3. Though Christ is referring to the Old Testament, the same must apply to the New, because it exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:9).

### **Matthew 24:35**

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

1. This is an amazing promise pertaining both to inspiration and preservation. The Lord Jesus promised that His words would not pass away, thus guaranteeing that His words would be inscripturated and preserved. John explains that it is not every word spoken by Christ that is preserved but it is those words that are inscripturated (Jn. 21:25 with 20:30-31).

2. The doctrine of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated throughout Scripture. The association is not merely logical, it is scriptural; it is not merely inferred, it is plainly stated.

3. Christ’s promise applies, first, to the four Gospels. It teaches us that the Gospels are supernatural. The human authors did not have to fumble around in a naturalistic manner, as most textbooks on the history of the Bible presume, borrowing from one another and from other documents, imperfectly and inaccurately describing things, their record then revised by others. The entire foundation of the modern field of “form or redaction criticism” of the Gospels is vain and heretical. It is vain because it is impossible at this point in history to know how the Gospels were written from a human perspective; and it is heretical because God’s Word informs us that the writing of the Gospels was supernatural and gives no emphasis to the “human element.”

4. Christ’s promise applies not only to the four Gospels but also to all of the words of the New Testament as given by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11). Some Bibles are “red letter editions” because they print the spoken words of Christ in red; but scripturally speaking, the entire Bible is “red letter” because it is the Word of Christ!

### **John 12:48**

“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

1. This is another amazing statement, and it touches directly on the preservation of Scripture. How is it possible that men will be judged by the Word of Christ unless they will be divinely preserved? We know that man cannot keep these words. It is impossible for man to record them infallibly and it is equally impossible for man to keep them from century to century after they were recorded. The Lord Jesus is making a bold and absolute promise of divine preservation.

2. We see again that is not merely the general teachings of Christ that will be preserved but the very words. It is both the “word” singular and the “words” plural that will be preserved.

### **Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Timothy 3:15; 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Peter 2:9**

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Mat. 28:19-20).

“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

“That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Tim. 6:14).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2).

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

1. These passages describe *the PROCESS or MEANS of preservation*. Evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend textual criticism would have us believe that while the Bible contains a general or vague promise of preservation (if not directly, at least by implication, they say), it certainly does not describe *the means* of preservation. For example, in an e-mail written to me in December 2000, Dr. James Price, a professor at Tennessee Temple Seminary in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and chairman of the Old Testament committee of the New King James Bible, said: “I know the passages that INFER preservation, and I believe the doctrine. I just don’t think that the Bible explicitly states HOW God preserved His word” (emphasis added). The fact is that the

Bible not only infers preservation, it specifically and explicitly promises it and it even tells us *how* it will be accomplished. (Further, how could Price believe a “doctrine” that is only inferred and not explicitly stated in Scripture? When I was a student at Tennessee Temple in the 1970s, I was taught that doctrine must be established upon explicit statements of Scripture and that vague inferences are not sufficient.)

2. God preserves His Word among the churches as it is being obeyed and as the Great Commission is being carried out (Mat. 28:19-20). In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests that preserved the Scripture (Deut. 17:18). In the New Testament, it is the priesthood of the believers (1 Pet. 2:9). The churches keep or preserve God’s Word as they carry out the Great Commission (1 Tim. 3:15; Mat. 28:19-20).

- a. Thus the Scriptures have been preserved in the church age not by “scholars” but by humble believers.
- b. Christ is foretelling the inscripturating of His words and teaching. The fulfillment of this is found in the divinely-given New Testament Scriptures, whereby the churches are able to hold fast to the “faith once delivered to the saints.”
- c. Christ does not foresee that His Words will need to be recovered; rather, He describes a process of preservation that will endure until the end of the age (Mat. 28:19-20). The Lord Jesus Christ, who knows the beginning from the end, assumes here that the Word of God will be available throughout the age. Otherwise, it would not be possible for succeeding generations to teach the “all things” of the New Testament faith.
- d. We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or in the Vatican Library or in a cave by the Dead Sea) but by being used in the midst of the churches. Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University says, “God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt” (stated during a debate in Marquette Manor Baptist Church, Chicago, 1984). He is referring to the view held by modern textual critics that the most authentic New Testament manuscripts were replaced in the 4th century by corrupt ones (the textual critic’s doctrine that the Traditional Text was the product of a Recension) and were not “recovered” until the 19th century when the handful of Egyptian or Alexandrian manuscripts were given prominence, but this flies in the face of the Scriptures’ own testimony. “God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using.’ He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, p. 90).
- e. The witness of the Latin and other versions have significance in determining the text of Scripture, because these were even more commonly used by the churches through

the Dark Ages than the Greek. Likewise, in this light the lectionaries that were read in the churches and the quotations from church leaders are important witnesses. This is why the Reformation editors looked to the Latin as an important secondary witness after the Greek. Thus in a few places there is more testimony to the preserved text in the Latin and the Latin-based versions than the Greek (i.e., Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7). Dr. Edward F. Hills observed, "...it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus [referring to the claim that a Greek manuscript was fabricated by Erasmus' contemporaries to support this verse], but the usage of the Latin speaking Church." This is the chief reason that we reject the Majority Text or pure Byzantine Text position promoted today by Zane Hodges, A. Farstad, Wilbur Pickering, and Maurice Robinson. We cannot ignore the Latin and concern ourselves strictly with finding a majority of the surviving Greek manuscripts. And when we refer to the Latin, we are not talking primarily about Rome's Latin Vulgate but much more of those lovely little hand-size ancient "dissident" versions that were based on Latin and that were used by Bible believers such as the Waldenses and Albigenses and Anabaptists and Lollards down through the Dark Ages, the pre-Reformation Romaunt, Spanish, German, Italian, French, Czech, English (Wycliffe 1380), etc. Most, if not all, of these contained the Johannine Comma in 1 John 5:7, and it is that type of evidence that convinced the Reformation editors of its authenticity even in the face of a minority witness in Greek.

f. The purest Bible manuscripts and translations were literally used up in the process of time so that they were replaced with new copies. This is why ancient manuscripts that are in mint condition such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus are deeply suspect. They weren't used! The majority of the most ancient manuscripts extant are mere fragments because they were worn out and come down to us only in pieces. The fact that manuscripts such as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus come down to us relatively intact from ancient times is due to their corruption and disuse. This process continues today. I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones in the brief period of a mere three decades since I have been saved. Ancient manuscripts would ordinarily have worn out even more quickly than modern Bibles, because they were used not only for reading and study but also for copying.

3. The churches are to hold to apostolic teaching (and Scripture) in every detail and they also are to pass "the same" along from generation to generation (2 Tim. 2:2). The words "the same" describe the process of the preservation of inscripturated apostolic teaching. Thus we see the role of individual churches in the task of Bible preservation.

4. God's people and the churches are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the "spots" (1 Tim. 6:14). The laxical attitude that characterizes the textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural. (Note: when we talk about the omission of thousands of words we are referring to the words in Hebrew and Greek and not to words in any translation thereof.)

5. “Faithful men” play an important role in Bible preservation (2 Tim. 2:2), because it is only such men who will care enough to guard the Word and who will have the spiritual discernment necessary for the task.

6. God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:18, 20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and temporality and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God’s own infinite power and His active role in the preservion process. We see this in Christ’s promise, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ... lo, I am with you alway...” Though men have an important part to play in the process of preservation, it is God Himself who has preserved the Scripture. Modern textual critics focus almost exclusively upon the “human element,” upon *man*’s role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.

7. This process has continued down to the end of the church age (Mat. 28:20).

- a. The process of preservation through the churches was in operation through the Dark Ages of Rome’s rule. This is why we know that the preserved Word of God is found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations thereof that were in common use among the churches during those centuries and not in the Alexandrian text that was commonly rejected.
- b. The process of preservation through the churches was in operation during the 16th and 17th centuries when the Reformation editors and translators put the Scriptures into print. They understood that the preserved New Testament was found largely in the Greek Byzantine text that had come down from Antioch and Syria in the early centuries of the church age and secondarily in the Latin that was widely used during the Dark Ages (not so much by Rome as by “dissident” or separatist Bible believers such as the Waldenses and the Lollards who used Latin-based versions). In a few instances, such as the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7, the Scripture was preserved more in Latin and in other versions such as the Waldensian Romaunt, the early German (the Tepl version), and early English (the Wycliffe version). But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.
- c. The process of preservation through the churches was in operation in the 19th century, when the Scripture continued to be preserved in the Bible-believing churches that resisted the tide of skepticism coming from Germany. Modern textual criticism was never popular in believing churches in that century. In fact, it was strongly resisted.
- d. The process of preservation through the churches is still in operation today. By the late 20th century, the tide of end time apostasy was so powerful that the corrupt critical Greek text and the translations thereof had become the majority, but Bible



believing churches continue, in the midst of this apostasy, to love, preach, and defend the preserved Scripture. Most of the staunchly fundamentalist churches today that are boldly resisting the ecumenical tide continue to love the King James Bible and other Received Text versions.

**Acts 20:29-30; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-2; 1 John 2:18; 4:1-2**

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Pet. 2:1-2).

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time” (1 John 2:18).

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God” (1 John 4:1-2).

1. These passages touch on the doctrine of Bible preservation in that we are informed that false teachers will infiltrate the churches with damnable heresies.

2. A “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1) is one that brings eternal damnation to the soul, a heresy that a saved person cannot believe. Damnable heresies pertain especially to the Person of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Gospel (2 Cor. 11:3-4), and to the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

3. The number of heretics will be large and many will follow their heresies (2 Pet. 2:2).

4. Thus God has not promised to preserve the Scripture by not allowing heretics to operate; He has promised to preserve the Scripture *in spite of* and *in the midst of* their dastardly activities.

5. This tells us that we can expect confusion in the record of the transmission of the Bible through the centuries, that the record will contain the doctrinal corruptions introduced by heretics, as well as the truth. This, of course, is exactly what we find. Manuscripts such as

Vaticanus and Sinaiticus give many evidences of having been tampered with doctrinally.

**1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 1 John 2:27**

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:12-16).

“But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him” (1 John 2:27).

1. These verses teach us that the Scriptures have been preserved among and by believers that have the Spirit.

- a. This is how the New Testament Scriptures were recognized as canonical (1 Thess. 2:13). Though we do not have a record of exactly how Israel gathered the canon of the Old Testament or how the early churches gathered the canon of the New Testament, we know that they did this by the Spirit of God and not by any natural process.
- b. This is why the issue of spiritual regeneracy cannot be overlooked in the issue of Bible texts and versions. There have been exceptions to this rule, such as Balaam (Num. 23:5), but it is an extreme exception to find a Balaam preaching the pure Word of God or being instrumental in its transmission. We need to focus on the rules, not the exceptions.

2. These verses also teach that it is the Spirit of God Himself who preserves the Scriptures.

- a. 1 John 2:27 is in the context of the apostle's warning about heretics and antichrists that had already infiltrated the churches in that day. How could the truth be preserved in the midst of such fierce assaults? The answer is not found in the arm of flesh but in the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent Spirit of God. Thus it is by the Spirit that the pure Scripture has been preserved through the dark hours of this age. Man could not keep the Scriptures. The most scripturally sound and zealous church is but weak and undependable flesh apart from the Spirit of God. For long periods in church history, believers have been extremely few and weak, scattered, discouraged, grasping desperately to a few scrapes of Scripture in the face of the seemingly

unstoppable onslaught of apostasy and inquisition. During such times, evangelism and Bible translation was accomplished under conditions of extreme difficulty, when at all. Entire groups of believing Christians were wiped off of the face of the earth, and their Scriptures and writings destroyed. In many cases the only record that has survived is the scorn that was heaped upon them by their persecuting enemies. This is dramatically true for the first 1,400 years of church history, but it is also true even for Bible believing groups of more recent times up to and during the early days of the Reformation. We know very little about groups such as the Waldenses, the Lollards, and the pre-Reformation Anabaptists of the 15th century, compared to what there is to know. (In fact, little has changed in this regard to this day. For example, there are many thousands of fundamental independent Baptist churches across the world today, but they are not even mentioned in the vast majority of influential Christian publications and contemporary histories, and for the most part their preachers are too busy fulfilling the Great Commission to write their own histories. An estimate was made in the 1970s that these churches numbered 10,000, and I would guess that they have multiplied at least five or ten fold since then. Yet if the Lord Jesus “tarries” His return, future historians studying this hour in church history might not even know that this vast group of fundamentalist churches even existed, and the little they might learn of them will be from the testimony of their spiritual enemies who cannot be trusted to give an accurate picture.)

- b. The weakness of man has not prevented the Scriptures from being preserved, for though man has a role in its preservation, the task ultimately does not lie on man’s shoulders. For “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:17).
- c. Therefore, when we look at the Bible text issue, we must focus more on God than on man, more on the *divine* than the *human* element.

### **Matthew 11:25; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29**

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Mat. 11:25).

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.” (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

- 1. These verses have a bearing on the doctrine of Bible preservation in that they tell us that the

truth will be found among ordinary, Spirit-regenerated believers rather than among the scholars of this world.

2. Thus I am *not* surprised that very few scholars understand biblical truth, and I am *not* surprised that those who approach the Bible text-version issue on the basis of divine inspiration and preservation are in the extreme minority.

**2 Timothy 3:13; Luke 18:8; Matthew 7:14; Luke 12:32**

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13).

“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mat. 7:14).

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Lk. 12:32).

1. These verses have a direct bearing on the doctrine of Bible preservation, because they teach important truths about the course of the church age.

a. Truth is not in the majority in this age. The Lord Jesus said “few” find the truth (Mat. 7:14) and He called His flock “little” (Lk. 12:32). Though God preserves His Word and He preserves it among the churches (as we see in Matthew 28:20 and 2 Timothy 2:2), this does not mean that it will be found in the world at large or even among churches in general.

b. The church age overall is characterized by increasing apostasy (2 Tim. 3:13).

c. The very end of the age is characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth (Lk. 18:8). The frightful prophecy of 2 Timothy 3-4 describes *professing Christians* in the last days. See also 2 Peter 3:3-7.

2. These truths relate to the issue of Bible preservation in many ways.

a. The preserved Scripture is often found in small pockets. This is what we see in the Dark Ages. The purest Scripture was not preserved in the Greek Byzantine text that was kept within the ever-narrowing borders of the Byzantine Empire and in translations used by smaller groups of believing churches. In our day, at the beginning of the 21st century, we see this truth in play as the corrupt critical Greek text and its translations have become the majority. This should not confuse a Bible

believer, because the Lord Jesus taught us that we should expect the truth to be in the minority.

- b. The record of the Bible throughout the church age will be a mixture of truth and error. The Bible is preserved *in the midst of* the enemy's attacks and *in spite of* these attacks, not *from* the enemy's attacks.
  - (1) This is exactly what we see. The true apostolic churches multiplied greatly in the early centuries, but heretical and spiritually compromised churches increased even more quickly, and by the middle of the first millennium, the heretical churches outnumbered sound churches and eventually persecuted and dominated them. For hundreds of years sound New Testament churches were bitterly persecuted and were forced to hide and to conduct their work in great fear and uncertainty. The dominant "church" of the Dark Ages, headquartered in Rome, was filled with gross heresies. Thus we can expect to find a lot of confusion in the record of the Bible as it passes from century to century down through the church age, and this is exactly what we see. Many manuscripts are grossly corrupt, the product of bold heretical attacks, with gross omissions such as the ending of Mark's Gospel. Others are largely pure but contain a few corruptions that slipped in because of the difficult nature of the times and the fact that the believers did not have the luxury of being free enough from persecution to gather the necessary materials and to purify their Scriptures.
  - (2) A purification process occurred in the 16th century as the Scriptures came out of the Dark Ages into the era of printing. The Protestant Reformation represented a changing of the times and seasons (Dan. 2:21) and resulted in great loss of power for the Catholic Church. Believers and their resources multiplied and they had a better opportunity to "dust off" the New Testament Scriptures, correcting the few impurities that had crept in on the Greek and Latin sides. This began an era that lasted for 400 years, and it was a divine and merciful interlude to the age-long growth of apostasy. (We are not saying that apostasy did not increase during the 16th to the 19th centuries, but we are saying that it was not allowed to dominate the churches as it had during the previous era.) During this era, the pure Scriptures again went to the ends of the earth, as it did during the first centuries. The Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and the translations thereof had no serious competition in these centuries.
  - (3) In light of Bible prophecy, we could not expect for this interlude to last indefinitely (Lk. 18:8), and it did not. In the 19th century apostasy began to blossom within Protestantism in even more damnable forms than it had assumed in the Dark Ages, by way of theological Modernism and Unitarianism and by the explosion of heretical cults. (See *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* for extensive documentation of this.) In the midst of the growth of this end-times

apostasy the principles of modern textual criticism were devised from naturalistic disciplines; the much-blessed Greek Received Text was despised and replaced with the Alexandrian text that had been discarded 1,500 years earlier. On the side of the English language, the King James Bible became the target of destruction and beginning with the English Revision of 1881, version after version was put forth in an attempt to dethrone it. By the end of the 20th century, the Alexandrian Greek text and the modern English versions had become dominant.

- (4) Since the end of the church age will be characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth, we can expect to find sound Bibles and sound churches in the extreme minority as the time of Christ's return draws nearer, and this is exactly what we find today. Europe, for example, is a bastion of apostasy, and it is no surprise that the Bible light has almost gone out in that part of the world and the only Bibles generally available are weak dynamic equivalencies based on a corrupt Greek text.
- (5) This explains why perhaps only one man trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level in the last 75 years approached the Bible text subject by faith, and that was Edward F. Hills. I am not puzzled at this fact; it is actually a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

## **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

“But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

1. The term “given by inspiration” applies directly only to the original process of the giving of Scripture. The same process is described in 2 Peter 1:19-21. Inspiration was the supernatural process by which the Holy Spirit gave chosen words to holy men of old so that what they wrote was the inerrant Word of God.

2. No translation can lay claim to this process. No translation is “given by inspiration.” Translation, rather, is the process whereby men render the Spirit-inspired words of Scripture into other languages. If it is done prayerfully and carefully and properly by godly, capable believers, under submission to the Holy Spirit, the words of Scripture can be rendered accurately into another language and such a translation can be called the Word of God in that language. It can even be called the inspired Word of God in that language. But no translation is given by inspiration.

3. Though the process of inspiration was something that was completed in the apostolic age, this passage associates the original inspiration of Scripture with its perpetual profitability and use among God's people. "There are some remarkable things about this passage that are often overlooked. The words 'is given by inspiration of God' are translated from the one Greek word, 'theopneustos' (*God-breathed*), and 'is profitable' is from 'ophelimos.' These two words are joined by the conjunction 'kai.' Thus, all scripture (*graphe*) is said to be 'God-breathed and profitable.' Therefore, while the Scriptures were inspired in the past and their profitability has to do with the present, yet both facts are joined together in an identical grammatical construction. Thus, it is the work of past inspiration which makes the Scriptures profitable in the present. And conversely, the Scriptures cannot be profitable in the present if the manifold blessings of inspiration have not been preserved. Past inspiration is inseparably linked to present profitability" (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bible Versions: The Dark Secret*).

4. The Scripture that Timothy had was authoritative and preserved. We know that Timothy did not have any of the original writings; he had copies of those writings, or, since his father was Greek, he might have had a Greek translation. Yet what Timothy had is called "holy scriptures" and was able to save him, protect him from error, and make him "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

### **1 Peter 1:23-25**

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

1. This is a clear promise of the preservation of Scripture. In fact, a stronger statement of the divine preservation of Scripture could not be made, for we are told that the word of God is living and incorruptible and eternal; therefore, it could not possibly cease to exist or be effectually corrupted. It abides; it endures; it lives.

2. The Bible is incorruptible because it is living, and it is living because of the Spirit of God who breathed it out. The Spirit of God did not breathe out the Scriptures and then abandon them. The Spirit that quickens the Scriptures preserves them. The same is true in creation. "Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Neh. 9:6). The Spirit of God did not abandon the world when He completed the creation. He jealously watches over the creation to preserve it and to accomplish the Divine purpose *and even more does He watch over the Scriptures*.

3. It is essential that the Scripture be pure because of its nature as the sole Revelation to man and as man's only way to Heaven. The Bible is the only Book in the world that contains the truth about God, life, and eternity. It is the only genuine Gospel of man's salvation. We must have a

pure Bible! Those who are unconcerned about the thousands of serious differences between the Received Greek text and the Critical Greek text, between the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Septuagint, between the old Reformation translations and the modern ones, have a strange attitude toward God's Word.

4. Peter associates the inspiration and preservation of the Old Testament directly with that of the New (v. 25). As the New Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11), we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.

### **Revelation 2-3**

1. The seven churches of Revelation contain a wide variety of instruction. There was instruction here for those seven particular churches that existed at that time in Asia Minor. There is instruction here for all of the other churches then existing toward the end of the apostolic age. And there is instruction here for every church at any point during the church age.

2. I am convinced that there is also prophetic instruction here that describes the general course of the church age. I believe the seven churches are prophetic parables, because their likeness to the various epochs of church history is too convincing to be an accident. With the interpretation of parables we must be careful not to try to force every detail but we look at the broad lines of the parable for instruction.

- a. EPHESUS (Rev. 2:1-7) represents the apostolic churches which were zealous for the faith but lost their first love.
- b. SMYRNA (Rev. 2:8-11) represents the post-apostolic age which was characterized by the onslaught of heresy and false teaching (Rev. 2:9) and fierce persecution (Rev. 2:10).
- c. PERGAMUS (Rev. 2:12-17) and THYATIRA (Rev. 2:18-29) represent the centuries during which the Roman Catholic Church was being formed. Pergamus was holding fast to the apostolic faith but was being infiltrated by the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:13-15). The doctrine of Balaam was the lust for money and prestige which corrupted church leaders. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans ("conquer the people") was the lust for power which led to the corruption of ecclesiastical offices. Thyratira was still holding to faith but was allowing Jezebel to teach her heresies (Rev. 2:19-20). The broad characteristics of these two churches were the characteristics of that period of church history from about the fourth to the tenth centuries.
- d. SARDIS (Rev. 3:1-6) represents the Dark Ages when Rome ruled. She had a name that she lived but she was dead (Rev. 3:1) and only a few in her midst knew the truth



(Rev. 3:4).

- e. PHILADELPHIA (Rev. 3:7-13) represents an interlude of revival standing between Sardis and Laodicea. This is the Reformation and the great missionary era that flowed from it during the 16th to 19th centuries.
- f. LAODICEA (Rev. 3:14-22) represents the final apostasy at the end of the age. She is characterized by her wealth and boasting and by her spiritual poverty and blindness (Rev. 3:17). A more accurate description of Christianity in these last days could not be given.

3. I believe we see some important lessons here pertaining to the preservation of the Scripture in this age. We see that the church age is characterized by a gradual slide into apostasy but that there are also periods of spiritual reformation. We see the same thing in the Old Testament. When applied to the doctrine of preservation, I believe it teaches us to expect high points during which God's people have the liberty, resources, and spiritual zeal to give fresh impetus to the preservation of Scripture. I believe we can see at least the following such high points in the church age.

- a. The first high point in the preservation of the New Testament OCCURRED IN THE 4TH AND 5TH CENTURIES, following the heretical attacks and fierce persecutions of the post-apostolic times, WHEN THE ALEXANDRIAN TEXT WAS REJECTED IN FAVOR OF THE TRADITIONAL TEXT.
  - (1) In the first two centuries following the apostles, the Scriptures suffered greatly at the hands of heretics as well as at the hands of Roman persecutors. As for the heretics, 19th century textual scholar Frederick Scrivener testified: "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED; and that Irenaeus and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior MSS. to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens, thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text" (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265).
  - (2) In the period of the 4th and 5th centuries following the heretical attacks and the persecutions two important things happened in which we can see the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of antichrist working side by side. First, the Roman Catholic Church was forming. It was given a big impetus when Constantine created (for all effect) a state church in the 4th century and intervened in church affairs, exalting and enriching some "bishops" and persecuting churches that would not submit. Second, the persecutions by the Roman emperors having ceased, the churches again had liberty to preach and carry out missionary work, and they did

this with great enthusiasm. Though most of the record of this work of faith has perished, we do know that translations were made in those days by missionaries and were used widely. The Gothic version, for example, was made by Ulfilas, who even created the first Gothic alphabet for this noble project. Both the Old and New Testaments were translated into Gothic in the fourth century. Bruce Metzger says this version “must have been the vernacular Bible of a large portion of Europe” in the 4th to the 5th centuries (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 377). Sadly, only a few fragments remain of this ancient missionary Bible and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic has been scraped off and overwritten with something else.

- (3) What we do know is that during this period of great missionary activity the Alexandrian text was rejected with great finality and buried in the sands of Egypt, so to speak, and the Traditional text was multiplied. This is a great high point in the preservation of the Scriptures. (I am not saying that the Alexandrian text was ever spread over a wide region or that it actually stood head to head with the Traditional Text across the biblical world. The Alexandrian text was always more of a local text.)
  - (4) Even the modern textual critics admit that the Vaticanus type text ceased to be used, attempting to account for this with their bogus recension theory. Consider the surviving uncial manuscripts. Of the roughly 260 extant uncials, most of them are from the 5th to the 10th centuries, and for the most part these “actually preserve little more than a purely or predominantly Byzantine Majority text” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 103). It is only a handful of the uncials from before this time that exhibits the strangely unstable Alexandrian text.
  - (5) Modern textual critics see this handful of Alexandrian uncials (together with their few counterparts in the fragmentary Egyptian papyri) as the authentic apostolic text. “... the vast majority of textual scholars today agrees that the Alexandrian text is most probably the closest representative of the original text available today” (J. Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 25). On the other hand, we see the Alexandrian manuscripts as examples of an aberrant text that thrived briefly in that hotbed of heresy, Egypt. God allowed heretics to tamper with manuscripts during the post-apostolic days but He did not allow the “text” thus created to prosper, the Spirit of God guiding His people to reject the false and keep the true.
- b. Another high point in the preservation of the New Testament Scriptures occurred in THE 9TH AND 10TH CENTURIES, WHEN THE OLD UNCIALS WERE

CONVERTED TO CURSIVE MANUSCRIPTS. The text that was converted was the Traditional text.

- (1) It is only reasonable to assume that the conversion process required a critical examination of the uncials used as exemplars for the new cursives and that only those uncials considered the most authentic would be used, perhaps not in every case but broadly speaking across the spectrum of the entire process. Surely those involved in this important process knew that the times had changed and that the uncials would no longer be used, that the conversion process would not be reversed, just as those who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries knew that the conversion from manuscript to print was permanent. Jakob van Bruggen has made the following valuable observation about this era: “In the codicology the great value of the transliteration process in the 9th century and thereafter is recognized. At that time the most important New Testament manuscripts written in majuscule script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script. ... The import of this datum has not been taken into account enough in the present New Testament textual criticism. For it implies that just as the oldest, best and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new uniform of the minuscule script, does it not?” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, p. 26).
- (2) It is important to understand that that the manuscript record was far more ancient and extensive in that day than in our day. So much of the record that was then extant was destroyed during the tumultuous, persecution-filled millennium that has passed since that day. Jack Moorman observes: “Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century [only a few hundred years after the apostles] would be in a better position to decide on the ‘oldest and best manuscripts’ than textual critics of the Twentieth? Why during this changeover did they so decisively reject the text of Vaticanus and instead make copies of that text which now underlies the A.V.?” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 26).
- (3) The conversion process of the 9th and 10th centuries also teaches us that ancient uncials were once extant that contained the Traditional Text. “Even though one continues to maintain that the copyists at the time of the transliteration handed down the wrong text-type to the Middle Ages, one can still never prove this codicologically with the remark that the older majuscules have a different text. This would be circular reasoning. There certainly were majuscules just as venerable and ancient as the surviving Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, which, like a section of the Alexandrinus, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script and their majuscule appearance has vanished” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, p. 27).

c. Another high point in the preservation of the New Testament was THE 16TH

## CENTURY REFORMATION DURING WHICH THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT WAS CONVERTED FROM MANUSCRIPT TO PRINT.

- (1) Prior to this, the New Testament had been handed down from generation to generation by the laborious and difficult process of hand writing. The printing locked the text into a standardized form and left less room for the introduction of mistakes. We believe it was the final process in preservation.
- (2) We agree with Edward F. Hills when he said: “A further step in the providential preservation of the New Testament was the printing of it in 1516 and the dissemination of it through the whole of Western Europe during the Protestant Reformation. ... In all essentials the New Testament text first printed by Erasmus and later by Stephanus (1550) and Elzevir (1633) is in full agreement with the Traditional Text providentially preserved in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. ... In it the few errors of any consequence occurring in the Traditional Greek Text were corrected by the providence of God operating through the usage of the Latin-speaking Church of Western Europe” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, pp. 106, 107).

### **Revelation 22:18-19**

“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

1. Capping off our survey of Scripture on the doctrine of biblical preservation is the testimony of Revelation 22:18-19. God gives mankind a dire warning not to tamper with the book’s contents. This applies directly to Revelation, of course, but the warning must apply equally to the entire Bible of which Revelation forms the final chapter.
2. Note that it is the WORDS that man is forbidden to tamper with, not merely the general doctrine or teaching. “For I testify unto every man that heareth the WORDS of the prophecy of this book ... if any man shall take away from the WORDS of the book of this prophecy...” If God forbids man to tamper with any of the WORDS of the Bible, it is obvious that He intends to preserve those words so they will be available to man. Otherwise, the warning of Revelation 22:18-19 is meaningless.
3. This passage instructs us to be exceedingly fearful about handling the Scriptures. If one tampers with other books, there can be earthly consequences (such as copyright infringement), but if one tampers with the Bible the consequences are eternal. The Bible is a supernatural Book and it must be handled (examining manuscripts, translating, etc.) with fear and trembling. It

appears to me that this is a missing element in the field of modern textual criticism.

4. God gave this warning because He knew that men would tamper with the Scripture. The promise of divine preservation is not the promise that no Old or New Testament manuscripts and translations will be corrupted. It is the promise, rather, that in the midst of the devil's attack God will keep His Word and not allow it to be lost.

### **Summary of the Doctrine of Bible Preservation**

1. The doctrines of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated in Scripture. The association is not merely logical; it is biblical.

2. The divine preservation of Scripture is not merely implied or inferred in the Bible; it is explicitly promised and carefully defined. It is therefore a Bible doctrine, and it must and can be accepted by faith.

3. God promises to preserve the words and details of Scripture as well as its teaching.

4. As the New Covenant exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:6-11) we can expect that the God who has promised to preserve the very jots and tittles of the Old will do no less with the New.

5. The Bible is preserved *in the midst of* the enemy's attacks and *in spite of* these attacks, not *from* the enemy's attacks. God has allowed corruptions to enter into the biblical record in general.

6. God gives His people wisdom by His Spirit to reject the corruptions so that the pure Word of God wins out.

7. The method by which God preserves the Scripture is its usage among the saints. God preserves His Word among His people as it is being obeyed. In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests who preserved God's Word (Deut. 17:18). In the New Testament it is the churches that keep God's Word as they carry out the Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20; 1 Tim. 3:15).

8. Though God preserves His Word, this does not mean that it will be found in the world at large or even among churches in general. Truth is not in the majority in this age. At times the preserved Scripture can be found in small pockets, especially as the end of the age draws near.

9. The church age is characterized by increasing apostasy, and the record of the Bible throughout the church age is a mixture of truth and error.

10. As the end of the church age will be characterized by a great scarcity of faith and truth, we

can expect to find sound Bibles and sound churches in the extreme minority as the time of Christ's return draws nearer.

11. It is by the Spirit of God that the pure Scripture has been preserved through the long and dark hours of this age. Men have a role in the preservation of Scripture, but only the eternal God can guarantee its preservation. Thus we must look more to God than to man in this issue.

12. There are high points in the process of preservation. There were times of spiritual revival in which more careful attention was given to the Scriptures and any errors that might have crept in through neglect were corrected.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION**

1. What verse says that without faith it is impossible to please God?
2. What verse says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God?
3. What passage in the New Testament says God committed the Old Testament Scriptures to the Jews?
4. At what point in Israel's history was there a revival within the Jewish priesthood?
5. The Masoretes guarded the Old Testament Scripture from what century to what century?
6. What are two of the rules of the Masoretes which made it possible for them to transmit the Scriptures with such precision?
7. Be able to list the following eight important verses that teach the doctrine of preservation -- Psalm 12:6-7; 111:7-8; 119:152; 119:160; Isaiah 59:20-21; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23-25.
8. In Psalm 12:6-7, what rule requires that the antecedent of "them" in v. 7 be the "words" of verse 6?
9. Name two Reformers who interpreted Psalm 12:7 as the words of God.
10. Name three men who believed Psalm 12:7 refers *both* to the words of God and the people of God.
11. What verse says God's Word is settled forever in heaven?
12. What verse says the Scripture is capable of imparting "the deep things of God"?
13. What verse says God changes the times and the seasons?
14. What verse says God will reprove those who add to his words?
15. What verse says God's word will accomplish that which he pleases?
16. What verse says God's words will not depart out of the mouth of believers?
17. What verse says not one jot or tittle shall pass from the law?
18. What verse says the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away?
19. What passage in Matthew teaches us how God preserves the Scriptures in the New Testament dispensation?
20. What verse says it is the church that is the pillar and ground of the truth?
21. What verse says grievous wolves will enter into the churches?
22. What verse warns that false teachers will bring in damnable heresies?
23. What verse warns that many antichrists have come?

24. What verse says the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit?
25. 2 Tim. 3:13 says false teachers will grow worse and worse as the church age progresses. What does this teach us about the Bible version issue?
26. What passage warns against adding to or taking away from the words of God?

# **A. THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION AUTHENTICATES THE TRADITIONAL GREEK NEW TESTAMENT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES AND OTHER REFORMATION BIBLES.**

## **Section Summary**

1. A foundational fact
2. Four periods of church history:

The Apostolic Period -- The Completion of the Bible  
The Post Apostolic Period -- The Corruption of the Bible  
The Dark Ages -- The Persecution of the Bible  
The Reformation -- The Printing of the Bible

3. Conclusion and summary

## **A FOUNDATIONAL FACT**

There is a foundational fact about Bible versions today that must be understood by every student, and that is this: *All of the translations of the Protestant Reformation were based on the same Greek text whereas all of the modern versions are based on a different Greek text, and this accounts for thousands of changes.* For example in 1 Timothy 3:16 the word “God” is removed from the modern versions. This is because the word “God” is omitted in the modern critical Greek New Testament wherea it was in the Greek text underlying the Reformation Bibles.

1. Generally speaking, the KJV Greek text was the text commonly used among God’s people through the centuries.
  - a. It is called the “majority text” because it represents the vast majority of existing Greek manuscripts.
  - b. Even the modern version defenders admit that the Reformation text is the common or traditional text.
  - c. God’s promise of preservation tells us that this, therefore, is the inspired Scripture.
2. The Greek text underlying the modern versions came from Egypt and is called the Alexandrian text after the Egyptian city of Alexandria, which was a center of learning during the



early centuries of the church age. The article “Textual Criticism and the Alexandrian Text” at the [www.earlham.edu](http://www.earlham.edu) web site summarizes the standard view of textual criticism as follows: “This text arose in Egypt and is generally conceded to be the most important one. Westcott and Hort, who named this the Neutral Text, thought that Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus had preserved a pure form of the Alexandrian type of text.” Jacobus Petzer admits: “... the vast majority of textual scholars today agrees that the Alexandrian text is most probably the closest representative of the original text available today” (Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 25). And Peter van Minnen, in *Dating the Oldest New Testament Manuscripts*, concludes: “It is to be noticed that all the manuscripts listed above come from Egypt. The papyri ... Sinaiticus ... B [Vaticanus] ... We owe the early Egyptian Christians an immense debt” (<http://www.clt.astate.edu/wnarey/Bible%20as%20Literature%20documents/content2.htm>).

- a. Egypt is not the place where the Spirit of God gave the New Testament Scriptures. God chose to deliver the Scriptures to churches in Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe. Not one book of the New Testament is associated with Egypt.
- b. Beginning in the book of Genesis, the Bible warns about Egypt. The first mention of Egypt is Gen. 12:10-13 -- “And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.”
  - (1) This was a step of **DISOBEDIENCE** on Abraham’s part, for there is no record that God spoke to him about this. God had told him to leave Ur and go to Canaan, and when he did this he was walking in faith and obedience, because “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). But when Abraham turned aside and went down to Egypt, he was walking by natural sight and disobedience.
  - (2) Abraham’s disobedience quickly led to **DECEPTION**. Thus the very first thing that we see about Egypt in the Scriptures is that it is associated with disobedience and deception. We know that the principle of “first mention” is important, and that this is therefore an important spiritual lesson. “Going down to Egypt in the first two references of Scripture were times of disobedience and deception. Does God have a lesson here for us? The New Testament tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:11 that ‘...all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are

come.’ I believe He does have a lesson here and it concerns faith in His preserved Word and Words. Why do some, including some of our fundamentalist brethren, go to Egypt when it comes to recovering the manuscripts underlying our New Testament Scriptures?” (David Bennett, *Preserved in Egypt or Preserved in God’s Churches*, 2004, p. 1).

- (3) Abraham’s journey to Egypt also represented a **MISPLACED TRUST**. Another important reference to the danger of Egypt is Isaiah 31:1 -- “Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!” Instead of trusting in God, the Israelites were trusting in man. And this is exactly what we see in modern textual criticism. Its theories were not founded on faith in God’s promise of preservation. Rather, its theories were gathered from unregenerate men in secular fields. It trusts not in God’s promises but in the manuscript record.

### **A Tale of Two Cities**

“There is one point upon which both sides of the current debate agree: the early transmissional history of the New Testament is a ‘tale of two cities’, Antioch and Alexandria. And just as surely as the KJV Text was woven into the spiritual life of Antioch in Syria, so was also the Modern Version Text in Alexandria. ... The choice is a clear one, as there is very little common ground between them.

“Certainly Antioch has by far the more glorious Biblical heritage. It became to the Gentile Christians what Jerusalem had been to the Jews, and superseded Jerusalem as the base for the spread of the Gospel. The ‘disciples were called Christians first in Antioch’ (Acts 11:26). It was the starting point for the Apostle Paul’s missionary journeys. Mark, Barnabas, and Silas were there; as was Peter and probably Luke. The Book of Acts leaves us with no doubt that Antioch was the centre of early church activity.

“Egypt shares no such glory. It has always been looked upon as a symbol of the world-system which is opposed to the things of God. God would not allow His Son (Mt. 2), His nation (Ex. 12), His patriarchs (Gen. 50), or even the bones of the patriarchs (Ex. 13:19) to remain there. The Jews were warned repeatedly not to return to Egypt, not to rely upon it for help, not to even purchase horses there, etc. Thus, in contrast to what is being claimed today, it is hard to believe that Egypt and Alexandria would have been the central place where God would preserve His Holy Word. Frankly, it was the last place on earth that one could trust in doctrinal and biblical matters. It certainly wasn’t safe to get a Bible there! Even Bruce Metzger, a supporter of the Alexandrian Text, is compelled to catalogue the vast amount of religious corruption which came from Alexandria: ‘Among Christians which during the second century either originated in

Egypt or circulated there among both the orthodox and the Gnostics are numerous apocryphal gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses. Some of the more noteworthy are the Gospel according to the Egyptians, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Kerygma of Peter, the Acts of John, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Epistle of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse of Peter. There are also fragments of exegetical and dogmatic works composed by Alexandrian Christians, chiefly Gnostics during the second century. We know, for example, of such teachers as Basilides and his son Isidore, and of Valentinus, Ptolemaeus, Heracleon, and Pantaenus. All but the last-mentioned were unorthodox in one respect or another.\* In fact, to judge by the comments made by Clement of Alexandria, almost every deviant Christian sect was represented in Egypt during the second century; Clement mentions the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites. What proportion of Christians in Egypt during the second century were orthodox is not known' (Metzger, *The Early Versions of the New Testament*, Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 101). [\* Metzger errs in implying that Pantaenus was orthodox. As we will see, he mixed pagan philosophy with Christianity.]

"Let it be said again: Alexandria was the worst possible place to go for a Bible! Yet it is precisely the place that our present-day translators have gone in gathering the major sources of the modern Bible" (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bible Versions: The Dark Secret*).

## **FIVE PERIODS OF CHURCH HISTORY PERTAINING TO THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

To understand the history of the Greek New Testament we have to understand the following four major periods of Church History: *The Apostolic Period* (the completion of the Scriptures), *the Post Apostolic Period* (the corruption of the Scriptures), *the Dark Ages* (the persecution of the Scriptures), and *the Reformation* (the printing of the Scriptures).

### **THE APOSTOLIC PERIOD -- THE COMPLETION OF THE BIBLE**

In this section we will cover the inspiration and canonization of the New Testament from a believing perspective. I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Strouse for his groundbreaking book *The Lord God Hath Spoken: A Guide to Bibliology*, (Emmanuel Baptist Seminary, 296 New Britain Ave., Newington, CT 06111, 860-666-1055), which presents the "Received Bible" position that is so plainly taught in Scripture but that is so commonly ignored by contemporary biblical scholars. In my estimation, his is the best current work on this subject.

**During the Apostolic Period, the following important things occurred that are necessary to understand in regard to the Bible version issue:**

## **1. The New Testament was written under divine inspiration.**

- a. Jesus Christ received words from God the Father (Jn. 17:8) and He promised that those words would not pass away (Mat. 24:35). He further promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth, would bring things to their remembrance, and would show them things to come (Jn. 14:25-26; 16:12-13). Thus, the apostles and prophets who wrote the New Testament did not have to depend upon their fallible human devices. Edward Hills wisely observes: “The New Testament contains the words that Christ brought down from heaven for the salvation of His people and now remain inscribed in holy Writ. ... For ever, O LORD, Thy Word is settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89). Although the Scriptures were written during a definite historical period, they are not the product of that period but of the eternal plan of God. When God designed the holy Scriptures in eternity, He had the whole sweep of human history in view. Hence the Scriptures are forever relevant. Their message can never be outgrown. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever (Isa. 40:8).”
- b. The N.T. was inspired in its words. Paul said this in 1 Cor. 2:9-13 (“the words” v. 13). When Timothy was instructed to keep the commandment “without spot” (1 Tim. 6:14) Paul was reminding him that every detail of the New Testament is inspired and authoritative.
- c. The Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles were recognized as the Word of God from the beginning. Contemporary books on the history of the Bible commonly state that the authors of the New Testament did not know that they were writing scripture and refer to the reception of the New Testament as scripture as something that was haphazard and that took a long time. Consider the following example of this: “When the actual work of writing began no one who sent forth an epistle or framed a gospel had before him the definite purpose of contributing toward the formation of what we call ‘the Bible.’ ... They had no thought of creating a new sacred literature” (“Canon, New Testament,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). This is heresy. We must understand that most books on the history of the Bible in the past 100 and more years were written by men who have been infected deeply with the skepticism that has permeated biblical scholarship since the late 19th century. Consider the following statements from the Bible itself that prove that the writers of the New Testament understood that they were writing by inspiration and that the New Testament books were recognized as the Word of God by the apostolic churches.
  - (1) Paul considered his writings to be authoritative, the very words of God (1 Cor. 11:2; 14:37; Gal. 1:11-12; Col. 1:25-26, 28; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

- (2) Paul expected his writings to be circulated from church to church (Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27).
- (3) Paul stated that Scripture was being written by the New Testament prophets by divine revelation under inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 3:4-5).
- (4) Peter said that the word being preached by the apostles was the word of God (1 Pet. 1:25).
- (5) Peter put the commandments of the apostles on the same level as that of the Old Testament prophets (2 Pet. 3:2). A Jew would not have dared to make such a claim if he were not convinced that the apostolic writings were Holy Scripture, because he looked upon the Old Testament prophets as the very oracles of God.
- (6) Peter calls the epistles of Paul Scripture and puts them on the same level as the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3:15-16). “Although some [of Paul’s epistles] had been out for perhaps fifteen years, the ink was scarcely dry on others, and perhaps 2 Timothy had not yet been penned when Peter wrote. Paul’s writings were recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture as soon as they appeared” (Wilbur Pickering).
- (7) The book of Revelation was written as the prophetic Word of God (Rev. 1:3; 21:5; 22:18-19).
- (8) Luke claimed perfect understanding of the things of the Gospel, which can only come by divine revelation (Luke 1:3). Luke is either making a vain boast or he is claiming inspiration.
- (9) Paul quotes from the Gospel of Luke and calls it Scripture, putting it on the same level as Deuteronomy (compare 1 Tim. 5:18; Deut. 25:4; Lk. 10:7). Wilbur Pickering observes: “Taking the traditional and conservative point of view, 1 Timothy is generally thought to have been written within five years after Luke. Luke was recognized and declared by apostolic authority to be Scripture as soon as it came off the press, so to speak” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).
- (10) In warning the believers of false teachers, Jude refers to the “words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 17). He holds these words up as the divine standard.

- (11) John held up the teaching of the apostles as the absolute standard of Truth (1 John 4:6).

d. Conclusion

- (1) That the Bible is the infallible Word of God is foundational to every aspect of the Bible text-version issue. The Bible cannot be treated merely as another book. It must always be treated as something holy and supernatural, something set apart from all other writings.
- (2) When it comes to Bible texts and versions we must be concerned with the words and details because it is verbally, plenary inspired. We cannot accept the modern text position that thousands of words are somehow of no consequence. Our goal at all times is to have the very words that the Spirit of God gave to holy men of old.

**2. The New Testament was completed and sealed** (Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19).

- a. The New Testament was finished in the days of the Apostles and sealed in the final chapter, Revelation, with a solemn warning against adding to or taking away from it.
- b. The Roman Catholic Church claims that it gave us the Bible, but we know that this is not true for the following two reasons, among others:
  - (1) *Roman Catholic doctrine and practice is not found in the Bible.* The churches described in the New Testament are nothing like the Catholic Church. That “church” was formed over a period of many centuries following the death of the apostles, as false teachers corrupted the New Testament church and added their man-made traditions. In the New Testament we find no papacy, no priesthood after the fashion of Rome’s, no sacraments that are added to faith for salvation, no archbishops or cardinals, no baptismal regeneration, no mass, no infant baptism, no last unction, no Mary as queen of heaven, no Mary as Mother of God, no Immaculate Mary, no Mary assumed into heaven, no prayers to the saints, no treasury of grace, no purgatory, no holy relics or holy robes or holy water, no crucifixes or candles or cathedrals or monks, no “celibate” pastors, no enforced days of fasting, no prohibition against marriage or against eating meat, nothing about the church of Rome having preeminence over other churches.
  - (2) Not only is Roman Catholic doctrine and practice not based on the Bible, *it contradicts the Bible*, so it cannot be its source. Catholic dogmas such as the papacy, Mariolatry, the Saints, the Priesthood, the Mass, and Purgatory are not

only *not* found in the New Testament, they *contradict* plain New Testament teaching and practice. Consider a few examples:

- (a) The papacy contradicts 1 Pet. 5:1-4, among many other passages.
- (b) Mariolatry and the Saints contradict 1 Tim. 2:5.
- (c) The Mass contradicts 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
- (d) Purgatory contradicts 2 Cor. 5:1-8 and Phil. 1:23.
- (e) The Catholic Priesthood contradicts the New Testament in that Christ alone is a priest after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 7:21-27) and Christ established no priesthood for the New Testament churches other than the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9). There is not one example in the New Testament of a priest being ordained and set apart or performing the type of ministry that we see in the Roman Catholic Church. The N.T. gives qualifications for elders and deacons, but none for priests (1 Tim. 3).

### **3. The New Testament was received.**

- a. We see this in John 16:13; 17:8; Acts 2:41; 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:13. Though the record of this history is not extant beyond the pages of Scripture, we know that the reception and canonization of the New Testament books was not the haphazard thing that is described in most books on Bible history. The same Holy Spirit that gave the New Testament Scriptures by inspiration guided the churches in receiving them.
- b. We have already seen evidence from Scripture that the New Testament books were accepted as the Word of God in the apostolic churches. We have further evidence from the writings of church leaders from the first 100 years after the apostles.
  - (1) Clement of Rome. “Clement of Rome, whose first letter to the Corinthians is usually dated about A.D. 96, made liberal use of Scripture, appealing to its authority, and used New Testament material right alongside Old Testament material. Clement quoted Psalm 118:18 and Heb. 12:8 side by side as ‘the holy word’ (56:3-4). He ascribes 1 Corinthians to ‘the blessed Paul the apostle’ and says of it, ‘with true inspiration he wrote to you’ (47:1-3). He clearly quotes from Hebrews, 1 Corinthians and Romans and possibly from Matthew, Acts, Titus, James and 1 Peter. Here is the bishop [pastor] of Rome, before the close of the first century, writing an official letter to the church at Corinth wherein a selection of New Testament books are recognized and declared by episcopal authority to be Scripture, including Hebrews” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*). Though we don’t know where Pickering gets the business of Clement being “the bishop of Rome” (since the perversion of the office of bishop had not yet taken hold) or speaking with “episcopal authority” (because the only authority a pastor or bishop has is the Bible itself)

the fact remains that Clement, writing at the end of the first century, only a short time after the passing of the apostles, recognizes the New Testament books as Scripture alongside of the Old.

- (2) Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippian church in about 115 A.D., “weaves an almost continuous string of clear quotations and allusions to New Testament writings. ... There are perhaps fifty clear quotations taken from Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1 John, and many allusions including to Mark, Hebrews, James, and 2 and 3 John. (The only NT writer not included is Jude!) His attitude toward the New Testament writings is clear from 12:1: ‘I am sure that you are well trained in the sacred Scriptures. ... Now, as it is said in these Scriptures: “Be angry and sin not,” and “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Blessed is he who remembers this.’ ... In either case he is declaring Ephesians to be ‘sacred Scripture.’ A further insight into his attitude is found in 3:1-2. ‘Brethren, I write you this concerning righteousness, not on my own initiative, but because you first invited me. For neither I, nor anyone like me, is able to rival the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, who, when living among you, carefully and steadfastly taught the word of truth face to face with his contemporaries and, when he was absent, wrote you letters. By the careful perusal of his letters you will be able to strengthen yourselves in the faith given to you, “ which is the mother of us all” ...’ This from one who was perhaps the most respected bishop in Asia Minor, in his day. He was martyred in A.D. 156” (Pickering).
- (3) Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.) testified that the churches of his day met on Sundays and “read the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets” (*Apology*, I, 67). He also said: “For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, thus handed down what was commanded them...” (*Apology*). “[Just as Abraham believed the voice of God] in like manner we, having believed God’s voice spoken by the apostles of Christ...” (*Trypho* 119). “And further, there was a certain man with us whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believe in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem” (*Trypho* 81).
- (4) Athenagorus in 177 A.D. quotes Matthew 5:28 and calls it Scripture. “... we are not even allowed to indulge in a lustful glance. For, says the Scripture, ‘he who looks at a woman lustfully, has already committed adultery in his heart’” (*Plea*).
- (5) Theophilus, who was ordained pastor of the church at Antioch in about A.D. 170, quotes from 1 Tim. 2:1 and Rom. 13:7 as “the Divine Word” (*Treatise to Autolycus*, iii). In quoting from the Gospel of John he says that John was



“inspired by the Spirit” (Ibid., ii). He says, “The statements of the Prophets and of the Gospels are found to be consistent, because all were inspired by the one Spirit of God” (Ibid., ii).

- (6) Irenaeus died in 202 A.D. and a large number of his works are extant. Their translation into English covers between 600-700 pages in the *Ante-Nicene Library*. “Irenaeus stated that the apostles taught that God is the Author of both Testaments (*Against Heretics* IV, 32.2) and evidently considered the New Testament writings to form a second Canon. He quoted from every chapter of Matthew, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians, from all but one or two chapters of Luke, John, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, from most chapters of Mark (including the last twelve verses), Acts, 2 Corinthians, and Revelation, and from every other book except Philemon and 3 John. These two books are so short that Irenaeus may not have had occasion to refer to them in his extant works--it does not necessarily follow that he was ignorant of them or rejected them. Evidently the dimensions of the New Testament Canon recognized by Irenaeus are very close to what we hold today. From the time of Irenaeus on there can be no doubt concerning the attitude of the Church toward the New Testament writings--they are Scripture” (Pickering).
  - (7) Even some naturalistic modern textual critics have concluded that the New Testament in its current 27-book canon existed in Greek no later than the middle of the 2nd century, which is only about 60 years after the apostles. See David Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- c. From the second century we have evidence that it was customary for each church to have its own copy of the writings of the apostles that they might read and preach from them. “And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things” (Justin Martyr, *Apology*). Wilbur Pickering observes: “Both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus claimed that the Church was spread throughout the whole earth, in their day--remember that Irenaeus, in 177, became bishop of Lyons, in Gaul [ancient France], and he was not the first bishop in that area. Coupling this information with Justin’s statement that the memoirs of the apostles were read each Sunday in the assemblies, it becomes clear that there must have been thousands of copies of the New Testament writings in use by 200 A.D. Each assembly would need a copy to read from, and there must have been private copies among those who could afford them” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*).

- d. Surely many believers would be motivated to make their own copies of the Scripture, and doubtless this would have been the case with preachers. I have not seen this important point emphasized in other histories of the Bible, but it is only reasonable. I don't believe it was a matter of having to purchase a copy from a professional scribe. Though time consuming, it is not that difficult to make a copy of the New Testament. In the first few years of my Christian life, which was B.C. or *Before Computers* (I was converted in 1973 at age 23), I copied down copious portions of Scripture in my zeal for memorization and in the process of my studies. Had I lived in an earlier time when the Scriptures were not available in printed form, I have no doubt that I would have made my own copy from Genesis to Revelation, no matter how long it took, and I would also have made copies of portions to give away to other brethren and even to unbelievers. During the early months after I was saved I tediously made copies of my testimony by typing it repeatedly and using carbon paper to multiply my efforts, because I was too poor to afford to have it printed. I handed these out in my evangelistic work. I am confident that multitudes of early believers shared this zeal to make copies both of God's Word and of evangelistic pamphlets. It is only natural, for the believer is born of the Word (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), lives by the Word (Mat. 4:4), knows the truth by the Word (John 8:31-32), is a doer of the Word (Jam. 1:22), grows by the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), operates by the faith that comes from the Word (Rom. 10:17), is cleansed by the Word (Eph. 5:26), and defends himself by the Word (Eph. 6:17).
- e. In about the year 208, Tertullian pointed to churches founded by the apostles and indicated that the "authentic writings" were still extant and were the absolute standard by which the truth was measured in the believing churches. He urged heretics to "run to the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, IN WHICH THEIR OWN AUTHENTIC WRITINGS ARE READ, UTTERING THE VOICE AND REPRESENTING THE FACE OF EACH OF THEM SEVERALLY. Achaia is very near you, (in which) you find CORINTH. Since you are not far from Macedonia, you have PHILIPPI; (and there too) you have the THESSALONIANS. Since you are able to cross to Asia, you get EPHESUS. Since, moreover, you are close upon Italy, you have ROME, from which there comes even into our own hands the very authority (of the apostles themselves)" (Tertullian, *Prescription against Heretics*, 36, cited from Pickering). Pickering observes: "Some have thought that Tertullian was claiming that Paul's Autographs were still being read in his day (208), but at the very least he must mean they were using faithful copies. Was anything else to be expected? For example, when the Ephesian Christians saw the Autograph of Paul's letter to them getting tattered, would they not carefully execute an identical copy for their continued use? Would they let the Autograph perish without making such a copy? (There must have been a constant stream of people coming either to make copies of their letter or to verify the correct reading.) I believe we are obliged to conclude that

in the year 200 the Ephesian Church was still in a position to attest the original wording of her letter (and so for the others)..."

- f. In A.D. 367 Athanasius, who boldly resisted the Arian heresy denying the deity of Jesus Christ (though he had his own heresies!), published a list of Old and New Testament books that he said were "handed down and believed to be divine." This list contained all of the 27 books that are in our New Testament today.
- g. All of the Reformation confessions of faith upheld the 66 books of the Bible as divine Scripture. Examples are the Reformed Confession of 1534, the Helvetic Confession of 1536, the Belgic confession of 1561, and the Westminster Confession of 1643, and the Baptist Philadelphia Confession of Faith, 1742, to mention a few. The Westminster says the 66 books of the Bible were "immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion the church is finally to appeal unto them."
- h. What is the significance of these historical facts?
  - (1) These facts show that the same Spirit that inspired the Scripture enlightened the believers to recognize and receive it (Jn. 16:13; 1 Jn. 2:20). Thus, the process of canonization was not haphazard as it is commonly depicted in contemporary books on the history of the Bible. God did not leave this crucial matter to chance. He guided ever so particularly so that the churches would receive the inspired writings and reject those that were spurious.
  - (2) The true text of Scripture was not lost among Bible believers in the early centuries; the authentic apostolic writings were still available in the early 3rd century; and there was no need to practice textual criticism in the early centuries of the churches.
  - (3) The early believers were literate. "...the world into which Christianity was born was, if not literary, literate to a remarkable degree; in the Near East in the first century of our era writing was an essential accompaniment of life at almost all levels to an extent without parallel in living memory" (*Cambridge History of the Bible*, Vol. I, p. 48).
  - (4) We can expect that the majority of extant manuscripts and versions will in all likelihood represent the pure text of Scripture, because the authentic copies were multiplied greatly throughout all of the Bible-believing churches by the zeal of faithful saints. Corrupt manuscripts and versions were used for a time and in certain localities, such as Egypt, but did not win out because of the providential activity of the Holy Spirit and the vigilance of believers.

- (5) We can expect to find the purest text of the New Testament Scriptures not in Egypt but in Asia Minor and Europe. “I believe we may reasonably conclude that in general the quality of copies would be highest in the area surrounding the Autograph and would gradually deteriorate as the distance increased. ... Taking Asia Minor and Greece together, the Aegean area held the Autographs of at least eighteen (two-thirds of the total) and possibly as many as twenty-four of the twenty-seven New Testament books; Rome held at least two and possibly up to seven; Palestine may have held up to three (but in A.D. 70 [when Rome destroyed Jerusalem] they would have been sent away for safe keeping, quite possibly to Antioch); Alexandria (Egypt) held none. The Aegean region clearly had the best start, and Alexandria the worst--the text in Egypt could only be second hand, at best. On the face of it, we may reasonably assume that in the earliest period of the transmission of the N.T. Text the most reliable copies would be circulating in the region that held the Autographs” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).

**4. The New Testament was carefully preserved and transmitted to the next generations** (1 Tim. 6:13-14; Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).

- a. The believers in the early churches were taught to keep the Scripture “without spot” (1 Tim. 6:13) and to pass along exactly THE SAME things they had been taught by the apostles to faithful men who would be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2).
- b. They were taught to carefully transmit the faith to succeeding generations of disciplines and churches. Christ commanded this in Matt. 28:19-20, instructing the churches to teach the disciples to “keep all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This would require that the believers possess “all things” in writing, which they did in the Gospels, Acts, and the epistles.
- c. There is nothing haphazard or careless about this process. The only ones who would be haphazard or careless in this regard would be the false teachers and nominal Christians.

**5. The New Testament was multiplied and went into all the world** (Acts 1:8; 12:24; 19:20; Rom. 10:18; 16:26; Col. 1:6, 23).

- a. This divine multiplication worked to safeguard the text of Scripture from the efforts of heretics to corrupt it. This is why we should generally look to the majority of witnesses in Greek and the versions.
- b. The fact that the Gospel was preached to all nations and tongues reminds us that the New Testament was translated into other languages at a very early period (the

Syriac and old Latin date to the 2nd century), and ancient translations are important witnesses to the text. “This translation of the Written Word into various tongues is but a carrying out of that which the miracle of Pentecost indicated as a distinctive characteristic of this age, namely, that everyone should hear the saving truth of God in the tongue wherein he was born. Thus, the agreement of two or more of the earliest Versions would go a long way toward the establishment of the true reading of any disputed passage. It is appropriate at this point to direct attention to the very great value of a Version as a witness to the purity of the original Text from which it was translated. Those who undertake a work of such importance as the translation of the New Testament into a foreign language would, of course, make sure, as the very first step, that they had the best obtainable Greek Text. Therefore a Version (as the Syriac or Old Latin) of the second century is a clear witness as to the Text recognized at that early day as the true Text” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorized or Revised?*, 1924).

- c. Through this process the New Testament books in Greek and other languages were distributed throughout the world in the first two centuries, throughout the Middle East, to Africa, Asia Minor, Europe, as far as England in the west and India in the east.
- d. The church at Antioch was central to the missionary process (Acts 13:1-4). This was the church that sent out Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, who personally carried the Gospel throughout Asia Minor and Europe and who wrote many of the New Testament epistles. It is therefore very significant that the Received Text is also called the “Antiochian” or “Syrian” text, from the fact that it can be traced to that part of the world. “Why should the great apostolic and mission-minded church at Antioch send to Alexandria or any other center for Scripture copies by which to correct her own? The Church at Antioch, conscious of her heritage and the excellence of her own first copies of the Scriptures, would have little reason to consider the resources of others superior. Antioch was the third city of the empire, a city with an independent and proud spirit; and something of this same independent spirit was part of its heritage as the ‘mother of all Gentile churches.’ ... Antioch may well have been the prime source of the earliest copies of most of the New Testament Scriptures for newly established churches. It will be recalled that Antioch was the place where the first Gentile missions originated; it was the home base for the apostle Paul; Luke may have been there; Mark, Barnabas and Silas, Paul’s companions, were there; Peter visited Antioch; Matthew may have written his Gospel there” (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 104, 105).

## **6. The New Testament faith and Scriptures were attacked even in the first century.**

- a. This attack took the form of heretical assaults against the New Testament faith.

- (1) Paul testified of this in many places, giving us a glimpse into the vicious assault that was already plaguing the work of God.
    - (a) Consider his last message to the pastors at Ephesus (Acts 20:29-30). Paul warned them that false teachers would come from without and would also arise from within their own ranks.
    - (b) Consider Paul's second epistle to Corinth (2 Cor. 11:1-4, 12-15). The false teachers at Corinth were corrupting three of the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament faith, the doctrine of Christ, Salvation, and the Holy Spirit; and the churches were in danger of being overthrown by these errors.
  - (2) Peter testified of this in 2 Peter 2. He warned in verse one that there would be false teachers who hold "damnable heresies," referring to heresies that damn the soul to eternal hell. If someone denies, for example, the Virgin Birth, Deity, Humanity, Sinlessness, Eternality, Atonement, or Resurrection of Jesus Christ he cannot be saved. Heresies pertaining to such matters are damnable heresies. The corruption of the "doctrine of Christ" results in a "false christ."
  - (3) John gave similar warnings in his epistles (1 Jn. 2:18, 19, 22; 4:1-3; 2 Jn. 8).
  - (4) The Lord Jesus Christ warned that many of the apostolic churches were already weak and were under severe stress from heretical attacks (Rev. 2:6, 14-15, 20-24; 3:2, 15-17).
  - (5) Thus the New Testament faith was being attacked on every hand in the days of the apostles by Gnosticism, Judaism, Nicolaitanism, and other heresies.
- b. Some of those who held heretical doctrine corrupted New Testament manuscripts and created spurious ones.
- (1) The Lord Jesus alluded to this when He warned that the devil would sow tares among the wheat (Mat. 13:25, 39). This applies both to the devil's attack upon the churches and his attack upon the Scriptures, the church's foundation.
  - (2) Paul testified of this.
    - (a) 2 Cor. 2:17 -- "For we are not as many which corrupt the Word of God." He warned that there were many false teachers who were corrupting the Word of God.
    - (b) 2 Thess. 2:2 -- "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Paul warned the churches that false teachers were forging epistles purporting to be authored by the apostles.

- (3) Peter testified of this in 2 Pet. 3:16 -- "... in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other scriptures." Peter warned that false teachers were wresting the Scriptures, particularly Paul's writings.

- c. This attack became more severe after the death of the apostles. We will see more about the importance of this as we progress in these studies.

**7. The New Testament was defended by God's people** (Acts 20:27-32; Rom. 16:17; Phil. 3:17; 2 Tim. 3:14-15; 4:2-4; 1 John 2:18-19; 4:1; 2 John 10-11; Jude 3-4).

The believers in the early churches were taught not only to receive the Word of God but also to use it as the standard of Truth and to defend it against all enemies. The believers were taught to contend for the faith. Thus, they were not passive in the face of false teachers and their wicked attempts to corrupt the Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ commended churches that carried out this obligation (Rev. 2:6). And when churches were careless in this regard, they were rebuked (2 Cor. 11:1-4; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 2:14-16, 20).

Churches that are zealous for the truth tend to be equally zealous for the Scriptures that teach the truth. The following quotes exemplify the attitude of the early churches toward those who were trying to pervert the truth:

- a. Irenaeus. "...there shall be no light punishment upon him who either adds or subtracts anything from the scripture." Irenaeus stated this in the context of the words of Revelation 13:18, which were being assaulted in his day *by the change of one letter*. Some were saying that John wrote 616 instead of 666, and Irenaeus went to the defense of this one letter of Scripture with alacrity. He "asserts that 666 is found 'in all the most approved and ancient copies' and that 'those men who saw John face to face' bear witness of it" (Wilbur Pickering). At that point he warns those who made the change of *a single letter* that they would be judged of God. My prayer is that more brethren today would have the zeal of Irenaeus toward the defense of God's wordS.
- b. Polycarp. "Whoever perverts the sayings of the Lord ... that one is the firstborn of Satan." This preacher minced no words when describing false teachers. In this he follows the example of Christ (Mat. 23:13-33) and the apostles (Acts 13:9-10; 2 Pet. 2:1-22; Jude 4-20)

All of this must be received by faith (Heb. 11:1, 6). Faith believes what God says in His Word (Rom. 10:17), period. Faith is not sight and does not depend upon "the manuscript record" or any other record in addition to Scripture. We believe that the world was created as Genesis says even though no man was there to observe it. Likewise, we believe that the Scriptures were

divinely inspired, canonized, and preserved because God's Word says so! We have other evidence on both counts, but we don't *need* other "evidence," and if the extra-biblical evidence appears to contradict faith it is only because we don't yet have enough facts or we don't yet have the understanding sufficient to interpret the facts.

## **THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD -- THE ATTEMPT TO REPLACE THE APOSTOLIC BIBLE WITH A CORRUPTION**

"The history of the New Testament text is the history of a conflict between God and Satan" (John Burgon).

### **1. Consider some testimonies to the severe attack upon the Bible during the 200-300 years following the apostles:**

Frederick Nolan: "In the age in which the [Latin] Vulgate was formed, the church was infested with Origenists and Arians; an affinity between any manuscript and that version consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted. ... the founders of those different sects had tampered with the text of Scripture ... in some instances the genuine text had been wholly superseded by the spurious editions" (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 468, 69).

F.H.A. Scrivener: "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED ... the African Fathers and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephen, thirteen centuries after, when moulding the Textus Receptus" (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265).

John Burgon: "In the age which immediately succeeded the Apostolic there were heretical teachers not a few, who finding their tenets refuted by the plain Word of God bent themselves against the written Word with all their power. From seeking to evacuate its teaching, it was but a single step to seeking to falsify its testimony" (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896). "WE KNOW THAT ORIGEN IN PALESTINE, LUCIAN AT ANTIOCH, HESCHIUS IN EGYPT, 'REVISED' THE TEXT OF THE N.T. Unfortunately, they did their work in an age when such fatal misapprehension prevailed on the subject, that each in turn will have inevitably imported a fresh assortment of *monstra* into the sacred writings. Add, the baneful influence of such spirits as Theophilus (sixth Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 168), Tatian, Ammonius, &c., of whom there must have been a vast number in the primitive age,-some of whose productions, we know for certain, were freely multiplied in every



quarter of ancient Christendom:--add, the fabricated gospels which anciently abounded ... and WE HAVE SUFFICIENTLY EXPLAINED HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT NOT A FEW OF THE CODICES OF ANCIENT CHRISTENDOM MUST HAVE EXHIBITED A TEXT WHICH WAS EVEN SCANDALOUSLY CORRUPT” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 29, 30).

Dionysius, a pastor at Corinth, in a letter dated about A.D. 168-176, testified that his own letters as well as the Scriptures had been altered: “For when the brethren desired me to write epistles, I did so. And these the apostles of the devil have filled with tares, cutting out some things and adding others: for whom the woe is reserved. It is not marvelous, therefore, if some have set themselves to tamper with the Dominical Scriptures as well, since they have also laid their designs against writings that do not class as such” (Hugh Lawlor and J.E.L. Oulton (trans.), *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, the Ecclesiastical history and the Martyrs of Palestine*, London: SPCK, nd., IV. 23, p. 130; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 116).

Hippolytus (or perhaps Gius) wrote sometime around AD 230, “They [heretics] laid hands fearlessly on the divine Scriptures, saying that they had corrected them” (Malcolm Watts, *The Lord Gave the Word*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1998).

Irenaeus, who died in 202 A.D., complained that the Marconians produced “an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they themselves had forged, to bewilder the minds of the foolish.” In writing against the Valentinians, he said: “They, however, who would be wiser than the apostles, write in the following manner [referring to Matt. 11:27]: ‘No man *knew* the Father, but the Son...’ and they explain it as if the true God were known to none prior to our Lord’s advent; and that God who was announced by the prophets, they allege not to be the Father of Christ” (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*).

Tertullian (c. 160-200 A.D.), in “Prescription against Heretics,” complained that the Marcionite and Valentinian heretics tampered with the Scriptures. “He said they abuse Scripture by the rejection of parts or through changing by diminishing or adding and also by false interpretation. He charged the Marcionites of being especially guilty of textual corruption and the Valentinians with using perverse interpretation, though ‘they also have added and taken away.’ He argues that the genuine text is in the hands of the catholic churches [referring not to *the Roman Catholic Church* but to “catholic” in the sense of *the churches in general*] because their text is older than that of the heretics. He maintains that the late date of the changed manuscripts proves their forgery” (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 117).

Gaius (also spelled Caius), who wrote between A.D. 175 and 200, named Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus, and Apollonides as heretics who prepared corrupted

copies of the Scriptures and who had disciples who multiplied copies of their fabrications (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 323). Gaius named four heretics who denied the deity of Christ and who were altering the text and distributing copies made by their disciples. Gaius said their guilt was certain because they could not produce the originals from which they made their copies. Note the following amazing quote by Gaius, which opens for us a window into that era as to the activities of the false teachers and the manifold changes they made to the New Testament manuscripts, disagreeing among themselves as much as they disagreed with the apostles: “The Divine Scriptures these heretics have audaciously *corrupted* ... laying violent hands upon them under pretence of *correcting* them. That I bring no false accusation, any one who is disposed may easily convince himself. He has but to collect the copies belonging to these persons severally; then, to compare one with another; and he will discover that their discrepancy is extraordinary. Those of Asclepiades, at all events, will be found discordant from those of Theodotus. Now, plenty of specimens of either sort are obtainable, inasmuch as these men’s disciples have industriously multiplied the (so-called) ‘corrected’ copies of their respective teachers, which are in reality nothing else but ‘corrupted’ copies. With the foregoing copies again, those of Hermophilus will be found entirely at variance. As for the copies of Apollonides, they even contradict one another. Nay, let any one compare the fabricated text which these persons put forth in the first instance, with that which exhibits their *latest* perversions of the Truth, and he will discover that the disagreement between them is even excessive. Of the enormity of the offence of which these men have been guilty, they must needs themselves be fully aware. Either they do not believe that the Divine Scriptures are the utterance of the Holy Ghost,--in which case they are to be regarded as unbelievers: or else, they account themselves wiser than the Holy Ghost,--and what is that, but to have the faith of devils? As for their denying their guilt, the thing is impossible, seeing that the copies under discussion are their own actual handywork; and they know full well that not such as these are the Scriptures which they received at the hands of their catechetical teachers. *Else, let them produce the originals from which they made their transcripts.* Certain of them indeed have not even condescended to falsify Scripture, but entirely reject Law and Prophets alike” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, v. 28; cited from Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 323, 324).

*Some observations about this quote:*

- (1) The false teachers who were tampering with the text were those who held heresies pertaining to the Person of Jesus Christ; thus we can assume that the changes that they made were associated with their heresies and were for the purpose of modifying the Scriptures to their heretical doctrine.
- (2) The heretics disagreed among themselves and made changes to the texts that were contradictory to those made in other manuscripts and by other heretics.

- (3) This type of thing is exactly what we see in the Egyptian manuscripts that are preferred by the modern textual critics. The Vaticanus New Testament disagrees with the Sinaiticus in over 3,000 places *in the Gospels alone, not counting spelling mistakes*. Papyrus 45 disagrees with papyrus 66 in 73 places *apart from obvious scribal mistakes* in the mere 70 verses that these fragments are extant!

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-230 A.D.) mentions the following heretics in Egypt in the 2nd century: the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Marcionites, the Peratae, the Encratites, the Docetists, the Haimetites, the Cainites, the Ophites, the Simonians, and the Eutychites (Metzger, *Early Versions*, p. 101). Clement complained that some of these tampered with the Gospels “for their own sinister ends” (Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 117).

Eusebius (270-340 A.D.) listed many spurious books that were produced “by the heretics under the name of the apostles,” mentioning Peter, Thomas, and Matthew, Andrew, and John. He called these writings “the fictions of heretical men” and warned that they are “to be rejected as altogether absurd and impious.”

Augustine (c. 400) testified that some had omitted John 7:53-8:11 from manuscripts. “Certain persons of little faith, or rather enemies of the truth faith, fearing, I suppose, lest their wives should be given impunity in sinning, removed from their manuscripts the Lord’s act of forgiveness toward the adulteress, as if He who had said ‘sin no more’ had granted permission to sin” (quoted from Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 151).

## **2. Consider some examples of the attack upon the Bible by heretics during the Post-Apostolic period:**

### Gnosticism

- (1) Gnosticism refers to a doctrine of salvation through a secret knowledge of divine things. The Greek word “gnosis” means knowledge. Gnosticism is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of heresy, held both by non-Christians and those who professed Christ. Gnosticism was developed by non-Christians who borrowed from Greek philosophy, Judaism, and Oriental mysticism. Elements of Gnosticism were then borrowed by professing Christians, who intermingled Gnostic thought with New Testament teaching.
- (2) Gnosticism denied that the world was made directly by the one God of the Bible. Instead, it taught that God was separated from the allegedly evil creation by a system of emanations or “aeons” or angels. “Gnostics taught that matter was evil and spirit was good. Therefore they were faced with the problem of how a good

God could create an evil world. A system of emanations was their answer, that is, there emanated from God an infinite chain of beings that became increasingly evil. Finally, at the end of the line came the Demiurge, or somewhat evil God, who was identified with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and who was thought to be the Creator of the world and man” (McClintock & Strong *Cyclopedia*).

- (3) Gnostics differentiated between the Christ spirit and the man Jesus. “There was a great variety of Gnostic systems, but a common pattern ran through them all. From the pleroma, or spiritual world of aeons the divine Christ descended and united Himself for a time (according to Ptolemy, between the baptism and the passion) to the historical personage” (J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 1958, p. 141).
- (4) According to Gnostic teaching, certain select individuals called “spirituals” are chosen to come to an understanding of the secret *gnosis*. This promoted an aristocratic pride among those who thought of themselves as the chosen ones. This idea was borrowed by “Christian” Gnostics who taught that Jesus was one of these spirituals and that he learned the *gnosis* in Egypt. This doctrine is still held today and is taught in books such as *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, which I studied and believed before I was converted.
- (5) As Gnosticism taught that the material creation is evil, most Gnostics held extreme ascetic ideas about sex and marriage, believing that marriage is evil. At the opposite end of the scale were Gnostics who lived very licentious lives, claiming that “they were the pearls who could not be stained by any external mud.” These included Carpocrates and his son Epiphanes, who taught that promiscuity was God’s law (Lion’s *History of Christianity*, p. 97).
- (6) Gnosticism focused on secret knowledge and traditions, secret teachings allegedly passed down from Adam or from Jesus or from the apostles, etc. By its very nature it was complicated and difficult to understand.
- (7) The seedbed for Gnosticism was Alexandria, Egypt. Some of the influential Gnostics who taught at Alexandria were Ptolemy, Basilides, Isidore, Carpocrates, Epiphanes, and Valentinus.
- (8) Gnosticism was so widespread that it almost overthrew sound New Testament faith in some parts of the world, particularly in Egypt. “Gnosticism at any rate came within an ace of swamping the central tradition” (Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 142).
- (9) Gnostic teachings are identified with the spirit of antichrist in 1 John 2:18-27; 4:3-6; 2 John 7-11.

- (10) Paul refutes gnostic-type teachings in Col. 2:8-23; 1 Tim. 4:1-8; 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18.

### Marcion

- (1) According to Tertullian, Marcion was a Christian who turned aside to Gnostic heresies. “Justin Martyr and Irenaeus wrote against him: besides Origen and Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian in the West, and Epiphanius in the East, elaborately refuting his teaching, and give us large information as to his method of handling Scripture” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).
- (2) Marcion believed the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New and that the Old and New Testaments are contradictory. He looked upon Christ as some type of phantom and not a real man. He taught that Christ redeemed Old Testament rebels such as Cain and Korah. He denied the bodily resurrection.
- (3) Marcion was not afraid to tamper with the Scriptures. In particular, he removed portions of them. “Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures. . . . they assert that these alone are authentic which they themselves HAVE SHORTENED” (Irenaeus, c. 150 A.D.). “Marcion has left a mark on the text of Scripture of which traces are distinctly recognizable at the present day” (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).
- (4) In light of Marcion’s habit of “shortening” the Scriptures, it is important to note that a chief characteristic of the modern Critical Text is its omissions. Compared to the Received Text, the omissions alone total 2,886 words, equivalent to removing the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the New Testament.

### Valentinus

- (1) Valentinus lived in Egypt in the 2nd century.
- (2) Valentinus taught a convoluted, Plato-influenced Gnostic doctrine that God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit were all somehow created; the Father was created by the first Great Cause, and Christ and the Holy Spirit were subsequently created by the Father.
- (3) Valentinus denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ. He made a sharp distinction between the Word and the Son. According to the Valentinians, the Word is God but the Son is something lesser. Some Valentinians denied the physical nature of Christ’s body, believing it was “psychical.”

- (4) John Burgon demonstrated that the “the only begotten God” reading in John 1:18 in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts can be traced to Valentinus (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). “The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (Aeons)” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74). In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son. (See also Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, p. 134.)
- (5) Another heresy associated with Valentinus, or at least with some of his followers, was Docetism, which was an attack upon the humanity of Christ. According to this doctrine, Christ’s human nature was only an appearance. Docetism “altogether denied the real, humanly-sensuous side of Christ’s life, and only acknowledged as real the revelation of the divine Being. ... Docetism was a most subtle element, which wrought variously before it had any discernible concentration in any leading men or sects, and it infused its unreal and fantastic leaven into various Gnostic sects, and other later ones which grew out of Gnosticism. It was a deep, natural, rationalistic, pseudo-spiritualistic, anti-incarnation element. It was firmly set against the real union of the divine and human in Christ, and against all dogmas which depend upon the reality of the incarnation” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).

### Cerinthianism

- (1) It appears that Cerinthus’ doctrinal system in the early 2nd century was a mixture of Gnosticism, Judaism, and Christianity.
- (2) Cerinthus denied the Trinity and the full Godhead of Jesus, denying the virgin birth, teaching that the Word was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic ‘Aion’ associated with the man Jesus up to his crucifixion (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek, *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). “Jesus he supposed not to be born of a virgin, but to be the son of Joseph and Mary, born altogether as other men are; but he excelled all men in virtue, knowledge, and wisdom. At His baptism, the Christ came down upon Him, from God who is over all, in the shape of a dove; and then He declared to the world the unknown Father, and wrought miracles. At the end, the Christ left Jesus, and Jesus suffered and rose again, but the Christ, being spiritual, was impassible” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).

- (3) Cerinthus also denied the bodily resurrection of Christ. He opposed the apostles in Judaea and possibly wrote false epistles as from the apostles.

Adoptionism. This was the heresy, already briefly touched upon, that Jesus was born an ordinary man and that he became the Son of God at his baptism when the Christ Spirit came upon him. “There was a strong movement in the early centuries to deny Christ’s true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as ‘Adoptionism’ or ‘spirit Christology.’ The heresy follows this line of reasoning: Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was ‘adopted’ by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the ‘Christ-Spirit’ at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at his baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separated personages. Many names and groups are associated with this wicked teaching, foremost of whom were the Gnostics” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bible Versions: The Dark Secret*, p. 15).

Sabellianism. This heresy, taught by Sabellius in the early 3rd century, denied the doctrine of the Trinity, claiming that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are merely three ways in which God has revealed Himself, that they are not three eternal Persons in one God. “The one divine substance simply assumes three forms (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost) in its threefold relation to the world. ... In illustration of this, Sabellius compares the Father to the visible globe of the sun, the Son to its illuminating effects, and the Spirit to its warming influence, while the sun, *per se*, would correspond to the simple divine substance ... As the three manifestations are conceived of as successive, so, also, are they but temporary and transitory. The divine substance does not manifest itself simultaneously in three forms, but as each new manifestation is made the previous one ceases; and when, finally, all three stages have been passed, the triad will again return into the monad, and the divine substance will again be all and in all. ... [Sabellius] differs from the orthodox view by his denial of the trinity of essence and the permanence of the threefold manifestation, thus making of the Father, Son, and Spirit simply a transient series of phenomena, which fulfil their mission, and then return into the abstract one divine substance” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).

### Arianism

- (1) This heresy was promoted by Arius, an elder in the church at Alexandria, Egypt, in the early 4th century.
- (2) According to the teaching of Arius, the Son of God was not equal to God, not eternal, but was created by God the Father before the foundation of the world. Arius taught that the Father alone is God and the Son is a creature, though the most perfect and exalted of creatures.

- (3) Arius argued doctrine from human logic rather than strictly from the Scriptures, reasoning, “The Father is a Father; the Son is a Son; therefore the Father must have existed before the Son; therefore once the Son was not; therefore he was made, like all creatures, of a substance that had not previously existed.”

### Ebionism

- (1) The Ebionites, who were influential from the 2nd to the 4th centuries, were Judaizers who attempted to intermingle Christianity with the Mosaic law and who corrupted the doctrine of Christ, teaching that Jesus was only a man and not God, that he was not virgin born, that his sense of Messianic calling came upon him at his baptism (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*).
- (2) The Ebionites treated Paul as a heretic and rejected all of his epistles.

### Tatian

- (1) Tatian lived in the second century and his Christianity was intermingled with pagan philosophy and Gnostic tendencies.
- (2) He practiced an extreme asceticism, prohibiting marriage (claiming that it is a state of fornication) and prohibiting the eating of meat. Thus he taught “doctrines of devils” (1 Tim. 4:1-5). Writing toward the end of the 2nd century, Irenaeus of Lyons warned that Tatian denounced marriage as “corruption and fornication.”
- (3) He taught a works salvation, claiming that “eternal life demands a radical renunciation of possessions, family life and marriage, i.e., the prize demands a life in abstinence and virginity” (T.V. Philip, *East of the Euphrates: Early Christianity in Asia*, <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=1553&C=1361>). He thus confused the salvation, which is a gift (Eph. 2:8-9), with the reward for Christian service, which is a prize (Phil. 3:14).
- (4) Tatian further taught Docetic doctrines pertaining to the person of Christ, separating the divine Word from the man Jesus. He wrote, “...the Logos descended to Jesus and was mingled with his soul; the Logos dwelt in him as in a temple” (Tatian, *Oration to the Greeks*, 15:2, quoted from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 52).
- (5) Tatian’s most famous work was a harmony of the four Gospels called the *Diatessaron* (*dia tessaron*, meaning *through the four*), also known as the *Gospel of Tatian*. Tatian’s harmony contained “several textual alterations which lent support to ascetic or encratite [ascetic] views” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*). “Tatian was able to weave into the gospel his encratite views. He



modified several of the sayings of Jesus in the canonical texts to suit his purpose” (Philip, *East of the Euphrates*). Indeed, Tatian was “censured as being a dangerous compiler and falsifier of Holy Writ” (*McClintock & Strong*). “But Tatian beyond every other writer of antiquity appears to me to have caused alterations in the Sacred Text” (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of the Corruption*, p. 212).

### Manes

- (1) Manes (or Mani) was a third century North African sect leader, and it was his doctrine that was originally given the term Manichaeism. (This term was later slanderously misused as a title of approbation against Bible-believing Christians, such as Paulicians and Waldenses, by the Roman Catholic Church.)
- (2) It appears that Manichaeism was a form of ascetic Gnosticism that combined Christian thought and paganism in various unscriptural ways. Following are some of the principles as outlined by George Faber in his *History of the Ancient Vallenses and Albigenses*:
  - (a) There are two independent Principles; the one, good; the other, evil: of whom, the material world was created by the Evil Principle, while the spiritual world was the work of the Good Principle.
  - (b) Christ was never really incarnate, his apparent flesh being a mere visionary illusion; because sincere matter was the work of the evil god and thence inherently bad itself, it was a contradiction to assert that Christ, the Son of the good God, could have assumed a true fleshly material body.
  - (c) Baptism by material water ought not to be administered and marriage ought to be reviled and rejected.
  - (d) The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ were denied.
  - (e) The independent Principle of good and the independent Principle of evil each created various angelic intelligences, severally in nature resembling their respective Creators.
  - (f) The resurrection of the body was denied.
  - (g) Freedom of the will was denied; without any choice or preference, the Elect were fatally impelled to perform good deeds, while the Reprobate were no less fatally constrained to perform evil deeds.
- (3) According to John Burgon, Manes was the father of the textual corruption in John 10:14, which destroys the subtle distinction between the way God the Son knows His own sheep and the Father and the way His sheep know Him. The modern versions have repeated this error, as follows:

KJV: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."  
 ASV: "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me,"  
 RSV: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me."  
 NIV: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

In the Traditional Text, the way that Jesus knows His sheep and the way He knows the Father and the Father knows Him (v. 15) is different from the way the sheep know Him. The KJV accurately translates the difference. However, the change in the critical Greek has the sheep knowing Jesus just as Jesus knows the sheep. "...this change destroys the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature's knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father" (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*).

"But in fact it is discovered that these words of our LORD experienced depravation at the hands of the Manichaeian heretics. Besides inverting the clauses, (and so making it appear that such knowledge begins on the side of Man,) Manes (A.D. 216) obliterated the peculiarity above indicated. Quoting from his own fabricated Gospel, he acquaints us with the form in which these words were exhibited in that mischievous production. This we learn from Epiphanius and from Basil" (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of Corruption*, pp. 206, 207).

### **3. Consider some examples of spurious writings created during this period:**

#### **a. The Gospel of Nicodemus**

- (1) The Gospel of Nicodemus dates to the 2nd and 3rd centuries and is composed of the Acts of Pilate and the Gospel of James. It claims to have been written by Pilate with material obtained from Nicodemus and contains an account of the trial and death of Christ "embellished with fabulous additions."
- (2) It contains a mythical account of Christ in Hell.
- (3) It contains a mythical history of Mary's early years.

#### **b. The Shepherd of Hermas**

- (1) The Shepherd of Hermas dates to the 2nd century. It consists of five Visions,

twelve Mandates, and ten Similitudes, all claiming to be divine revelations.

- (2) It describes fanciful visions of a female angel who preaches repentance. The angel offers forgiveness through repentance, prayer, and good works apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- (3) It promotes ascetism through fasting and poverty. It teaches the error that martyrdom results in forgiveness of sins.
- (4) It teaches the heresy of "Adoptionism." Following is a quote: "The Redeemer is the virtuous man chosen by God, with whom that Spirit of God was united. As He did not defile the spirit, but kept Him constantly as His companion, and carried out the work to which the Deity had called Him ... He was in virtue of a Divine decree, adopted as a son" (*Shepherd of Hermas*, quoted from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 5).

c. The Epistle of Barnabas

- (1) This spurious writing probably was made at the end of the 1st or the early part of the 2nd century. It is mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome.
- (2) It was not written by the Barnabas who was Paul's companion on his first missionary journey from Antioch. Instead it was written by an anonymous heretic. "The probable opinion is that this epistle existed anonymously in the Alexandrian Church, and was ignorantly attributed to Barnabas. It was probably written by a Jewish Christian, who had studied Philo, and who handled the O.T. in an allegorical way..." (*McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia*).
- (3) It is filled with errors and fanciful allegorizing. For example it claims that the Law of God was disannulled when Moses broke the tables of stone, that all of the Jews were to spit on the scapegoat, that Abraham was familiar with the Greek alphabet, and that water baptism saves the soul.
- (4) Origen considered the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas as canonical Scripture (Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament*, p. 103).

d. The Epistle of Clement of Rome

- (1) The Epistle to the Corinthians by Clement from Rome is often called the First Epistle of Clement, but the epistle commonly called II Clement is not by the same person (*McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia*). The Epistle of Clement was probably written in the very late 1st century or the early 2nd century.

- (2) The Epistle of Clement is generally sound in doctrine (i.e., the deity of Christ, His second coming, the bodily resurrection) but it does contain fables, such as the mythical Phoenix used in discussing the doctrine of the resurrection.
  - (3) Some of the false doctrines taught in the writing commonly called II Clement are listed by Floyd Nolan Jones in *Which Version Is the Bible* as follows:
    - (a) Men are saved by works (2 Clement 2:12, 15).
    - (b) Christians are in danger of going to Hell (2 Clement 3:8).
    - (c) Christians don't get new bodies at the resurrection (2 Clement 4:2).
    - (d) Clement was a prophet who wrote Scripture (2 Clement 4:11).
  - (4) The only known manuscript of the Epistle of Clement and the writing called II Clement is bound with the Alexandrian Codex, which is in the British Museum and which dates to the 4th century.
- e. The Gospel of Peter was written about 150 A.D. "by docetic heretics who denied the reality of Christ's sufferings and consequently the reality of His human body. This false view is seen in the account which this apocryphal writing gives of Christ's crucifixion. In it we are told that when our Lord hung upon the cross, the divine Christ departed to heaven and left only the human Jesus to suffer and die. 'And the Lord cried out aloud saying: My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had so said, he was taken up'" (Edward Hills). According to Origen, the Gospel of Peter claimed that Joseph had sons by a former wife before he lived with Mary (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).
- f. The Gospel of Thomas was used by a Gnostic sect in the middle of the 2nd century. The following description is from the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*: "They are very largely concerned with a record of miracles wrought by Jesus before He was 12 years of age. They depict Jesus as an extraordinary but by no means a lovable child. Unlike the miracles of the canonical Gospels those recorded in this gospel are mainly of a destructive nature and are whimsical and puerile in character. It rather shocks one to read them as recorded of the Lord Jesus Christ. The wonder-worker is described by Renan as '*un gamin omnipotent et omniscient*, wielding the power of the Godhead with a child's waywardness and petulance. Instead of being subject to His parents He is a serious trouble to them; and instead of growing in wisdom He is represented as forward and eager to teach His instructors. The parents of one of the children whose death He had caused entreat Joseph, 'Take away that Jesus of thine from this place for he cannot dwell with us in this town; or at least teach him to bless and not to curse.' Three or four miracles of a beneficent nature are mentioned; and in the Latin gospel when Jesus was in Egypt and in his third year, it is written (chapter 1), 'And seeing boys playing he began to play with them, and he took a dried fish and put it into a basin and ordered it to move about. And it began to move about. And he said again to the fish: Throw out the

salt which thou hast, and walk into the water. And it so came to pass, and the neighbors seeing what had been done, told it to the widowed woman in whose house Mary his mother lived. And as soon as she heard it she thrust them out of her house with great haste.”

- g. The Gospel according to Thomas. This is different from the previously described Gospel of Thomas that relates alleged events from Christ’s childhood. This *Gospel according to Thomas* was discovered in 1946 near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. It is a collection of 114 sayings attributed to Jesus.

- (1) The Gospel according to Thomas promotes extreme ascetism, calling marriage “the deed of shame.”
- (2) The Gospel according to Thomas begins with these words: “These are the secret words which the living Jesus spoke, and Didymus Judas Thomas wrote them down...” This contradicts what the Lord Jesus said in Jn. 18:20. The Bible warns that it is the false christs that will delve in secret things (Mat. 24:26).
- (3) The Gospel according to Thomas ends with saying 114, “Simon Peter said to them, ‘Mary should leave us, for females are not worthy of life.’ Jesus said, ‘See, I am going to attract her to make her male so that she too might become a living spirit that resembles you males. For every female that makes itself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.’” [Perhaps this is where Peter Ruckman got his doctrine that every woman will have a male body in heaven. He certainly didn’t get it from the Bible!]

- h. Gnostic manuscripts were discovered in 1946 at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt, including Pistis Sophia, the Books of Jeu, the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, the Wisdom of Jesus, the Acts of Peter, the Apocryphon of John (giving a Gnostic account of the origin of the universe), the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel according to Philip, the Revelation of Adam, and the aforementioned Gospel According to Thomas.

- i. The Gospel of Judas was also discovered in the last half of the 20th century and a translation was published in March 2006. Prior to the discovery of this fragmented manuscript the gnostic gospel was thought to have been lost and was known only through Irenaeus’ late second century condemnation thereof in his *Refutation of All Heresies*. The *Gospel of Judas* presents Judas in a positive light as the only disciple that truly understood Jesus and who betrayed Jesus only because he was asked to do so. According to Irenaeus, it was produced by the Egyptian Cainite Gnostics who claimed that Cain, Esau, the Sodomites, Korah, Judas, and other villains of biblical history were actually the enlightened heroes who valiantly kept the truth in a dark world. According to this cult, a god named Hystera created the world and another deity called “Sophia” allegedly assisted the aforementioned people (*Refutation of All Heresies*, book I,

chapter 31, [http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-58.htm#P6155\\_1380364](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-58.htm#P6155_1380364)). It begins with the words, “The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot.” Jesus allegedly tells Judas that the world was actually created in a different manner than the account in Genesis, and that “an evil god named Nebro rules the lower world of humans.” Judas is the “thirteenth spirit” who was appointed to release Jesus from the physical body in which he was trapped. The Jesus of the *Gospel of Judas* laughs a lot, even laughing at the way the disciples pray and praise God. In this strange writing it is Judas rather than Jesus who is glorified by entering a “luminous cloud.” The Gnostic Jesus described in the *Gospel of Judas* is not Almighty God, not the Creator of the world, does not die for man’s sin, and does not rise bodily from the dead. It is no gospel at all.

- j. There were many other spurious gospels written in those days that have not survived but are mentioned in the writings of Eusebius and others, such as the Gospel of Eve, Gospel of Bartholomew, Gospel of Basilides, Gospel of Hesychius, Gospel of Apollos, Gospel of Cerinthus, Gospel of Marcion, Gospel of Philemon, Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, Gospel of the Egyptians, and Gospel of the Nazarenes.

#### 4. The heretical school in Alexandria, Egypt

- a. Egypt was a hotbed of heresy and fanaticism. As we have seen, prominent Gnostics were associated with Alexandria. “Egypt was soon filled with religious and philosophical sectaries of every kind, and particularly that almost every Grecian sect found an advocate and professor in Alexandria.”
- b. The unscriptural practice of **ascetic monasticism** arose in Egypt in those days. In a confused attempt to gain holiness, men and women would live in caves, avoid marriage, deprive themselves of sleep and food for long periods, forgo conversation and bathing, sit on top of pillars for months at a time, etc. The ascetics began to congregate into monasteries in the 3rd century and by the middle of the 4th century there were an estimated 3,000 monks and 27,000 nuns.
- c. Alexandria was the home of **PHILO**; this was where he taught and wrote from about A.D. 40 to 60. Though there is no certain evidence that Philo ever professed Christianity, he helped create the atmosphere in Alexandria that corrupted the churches there almost from their inception. He did this in two ways, chiefly, by intermingling pagan philosophy with the Bible and by interpreting the Bible allegorically to allow for philosophy.
  - (1) He intermingled the philosophy of pagans such as Plato, the Cabala, and the Essenes with the teaching of the Scripture. Philo especially loved the Greek philosopher **Plato**, who lived about 350 years before Christ. Plato taught the pre-existence and transmigration of souls (reincarnation), and a doctrine of “recollection.” He taught

that human “souls are parts of a vast universal Soul of the World, proceeding from the Divine Logos and created in the Logos by God, the Logos or Reason not eternally co-existent with God but created. The soul is considered immortal, but resurrection of the body is denied. Furthermore, the soul forgets, or is not conscious of, its experiences upon earth” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 2). Plato also taught a counterfeit trinity -- “first, the absolute pure being incomprehensible to man’s mind; second, the Logos or Universal Reason or Divine Nous; and third, the Soul of the World which proceeded from the Logos. The Logos was not an eternal but a created being, so that this trinity is inherently unequal” (Sightler, p. 2). *Plato taught by means of myths which he called “facts,” claiming that the historicity of these “facts” was not significant, only that they were vehicles for religious “truth.”* This division of truth from historical fact was picked up by theological modernists in the 19th century, who found in it a way to believe in Christianity without accepting it as historically true.

- (2) Philo taught a type of Gnosticism that paved the way for Arianism. He “taught that it was not God or the Absolute who created the universe but the Logos or Reason with the aid of a series of intermediate beings known collectively as the Pleroma.”
- (3) *Philo interpreted the Scripture allegorically.* This allowed Philo to make the Scripture say anything whatsoever, for if the Bible does not mean what it says literally as interpreted by the ordinary rules of human language, no one can know for certain what it means. Philo’s allegorical method also created a distinction between the initiated that understood the “deeper meaning of Scripture” and the uninitiated that understood only the “surface” meaning. “He pronounced those who would merely tolerate a literal interpretation of the Scriptures as low, unworthy, and superstitious ... Philo, besides this, regarded as higher that conception of Scripture which penetrated beneath the shell of the letter to what he thought to be the kernel of philosophical truth ... In this way, in spite of his opposition to Hellenic mysteries, Philo set up a radical distinction of initiated and uninitiated, a mode of interpretation which leads very easily to the contempt of the letter, and thus to an unhistorical, abstractly spiritualistic tendency” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*).
- d. A school at Alexandria was established in about 180 A.D. by **PANTAENUS**. Like Philo, Pantaenus mixed pagan philosophy with Christianity. He is called “a Christian philosopher of the Stoic sect” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*).
- e. **TITUS FLAVIUS CLEMENT** (115-215 A.D.) or **CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA**, a student of Pantaenus, taught at Alexandria from about 190-202 A.D. Clement also intermingled Christianity with pagan philosophy; he was one of fathers of purgatory; he taught baptismal regeneration; he taught that most men will be saved; he accepted apocryphal books as divinely inspired; he believed that men could become God. Clement “saw Greek philosophy as a preliminary discipline, a schoolmaster, to point

the pagan world the way to Christ” (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 7).

- (1) Clement’s heresy on baptism: “When we are baptized, we are enlightened. Being enlightened, we are adopted as sons. Adopted as sons, we are made perfect. Made perfect, we are become immortal. ... It is a washing by which we are cleansed of sins; a gift of grace by which the punishment due our sins are remitted; an illumination by which we behold that holy light of salvation--that is, by which we see God clearly” (cited from W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).
  - (2) Clement’s heresy on the godhood of man: “That which is true is beautiful; for it, too, is God. Such a man becomes God because God wills it. Rightly, indeed, did Heraclitus say: ‘Men are gods, and gods are men; for the same reason is in both’” (Ibid.).
- f. Another heretic associated with Alexandria was **ORIGEN** (185-254 A.D.), who succeeded Clement. He laid the foundation for modern versions with his commentaries and textual changes. Philip Schaff admitted that Origen’s “predilection for Plato (the pagan philosopher) led him into many grand and fascinating errors.” The Lutheran historian Johann Mosheim describes him as “a compound of contraries, wise and unwise, acute and stupid, judicious and injudicious; the enemy of superstition, and its patron; a strenuous defender of Christianity, and its corrupter; energetic and irresolute; one to whom the Bible owes much, and from who it has suffered much” (*An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern, from the Birth of Christ to the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century*, 1840).
- (1) Origen held the following doctrinal errors, among others:
    - (a) He denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture.
    - (b) He rejected the literal history of the early chapters in Genesis and of Satan taking the Lord Jesus up to a high mountain and offering him the kingdoms of the world (Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. III, p. 614). Durant quotes Origen: “Who is so foolish as to believe that God, like a husbandman, planted a garden in Eden, and placed in it a tree of life ... so that one who tasted of the fruit obtained life?”
    - (c) He accepted infant baptism.
    - (d) He taught baptismal regeneration and salvation by works. “After these points, it is taught also that the soul, having a substance and life proper to itself, shall, after its departure from this world, be rewarded according to its merits. It is destined to obtain either an inheritance of eternal life and blessedness, if its deeds shall have procured this for it, or to be delivered up to eternal fire and punishment, if the guilt of its crimes shall have brought it down to this” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).



- (e) He believed the Holy Spirit was possibly a created being of some sort. “In His case [that of the Holy Spirit], however, it is not clearly distinguished whether or not He was born or even whether He is or is not to be regarded as a Son of God” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).
  - (f) He believed in a form of purgatory and universalism, denying the literal fire of hell and believing that even Satan would be saved eventually. “Now let us see what is meant by the threatening with eternal fire. ... It seems to be indicated by these words that every sinner kindles for himself the flame of his own fire and is not plunged into some fire which was kindled beforehand by someone else or which already existed before him. ... And when this dissolution and tearing asunder of the soul shall have been accomplished by means of the application of fire, no doubt it will afterwards be solidified into a firmer structure and into a restoration of itself” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).
  - (g) He believed that men’s souls are preexistent and that stars and planets possibly have souls. “In regard to the sun, however, and the moon and the stars, as to whether they are living beings or are without life, there is not clear tradition” (Origen, cited by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).
  - (h) He believed that Jesus was a created being and not eternal. “He held an aberrant view on the nature of Christ, which gave rise to the later Arian heresy” (*Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, “Origen”). That Origen believed Jesus Christ had an origin is evident from this statement: “Secondly, that Jesus Christ Himself, who came, was born of the Father before all creatures; and after He had ministered to the Father in the creation of all things,--for through Him were all things made” (Origen, quoted by W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*).
  - (i) He denied the bodily resurrection, claiming that the resurrection body is spherical, non-material, and does not have members. “He denied the tangible, physical nature of the resurrection body in clear contrast to the teaching of Scripture” (*Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, “Origen”). He was condemned by the Council of Constantinople on this count.
- (2) Origen allegorized the Bible saying, “The Scriptures have little use to those who understand them literally.” In this he was one of the fathers of the heretical amillennial method of prophetic interpretation, which was given further development by Augustine and later adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. This destroyed the apostolic doctrine of the imminency of the return of Christ (Mt. 24:42, 44; 25:13; Mk. 13:33) and the literal Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom. It also did away with a literal fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel and set the stage for the persecution of the Jews by the Roman Catholic Church.
- (3) Origen was the first textual critic. “To Origen is attributed the earliest substantial work in the field of textual criticism” (Kenneth I. Brown, *The Church Fathers and*

*the Text of the New Testament*, p. 21). The introduction to the online edition of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume X, says Origen “is the first great textual critic of the Church.” He produced the *Hexapla*, which consisted of six translations of the Old Testament.

- (4) Origen taught that the believer must lean on “the church” rather than his own judgment and that Christ and the church are the only authorities, thus laying the groundwork for Roman Catholicism. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “[Origen] warns the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures, not to rely on his own judgment, but ‘on the rule of the Church instituted by Christ’. For, he adds, we have only two lights to guide us here below, Christ and the Church; the Church reflects faithfully the light received from Christ, as the moon reflects the rays of the sun. The distinctive mark of the Catholic is to belong to the Church, to depend on the Church outside of which there is no salvation; on the contrary, he who leaves the Church walks in darkness, he is a heretic” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Robert Appleton Company, online edition, “Origenism”).
- (5) Origen used his own faulty reason to determine the text of Scripture. The following example is from *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Scriptures* by John Burgon and Edward Miller (1896): “In this Commentary Origen, the leading Christian critic of antiquity, gives us an insight into the arbitrary and highly subjective manner in which New Testament textual criticism was carried on at Alexandria about 230 AD. In his comment on Matthew 19:17-21 (Jesus’ reply to the rich young man) Origen reasons that Jesus could not have concluded his list of God’s commandments with the comprehensive requirement, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. For the reply of the young man was, All these things have I kept from my youth up, and Jesus evidently accepted this statement as true. But if the young man had loved his neighbor as himself, he would have been perfect, for Paul says that the whole law is summed up in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But Jesus answered, If thou wilt be perfect etc., implying, that the young man was not yet perfect. Therefore, Origen argued, the commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, could not have been spoken by Jesus on this occasion and was not part of the original text of Matthew. The clause had been added, Origen concluded, by some tasteless scribe.” Thus, Origen made crucial textual decisions based on his own faulty reasoning. Contrary to Origen’s claim, it is very obvious that the Lord Jesus *did not* accept the rich young ruler’s profession that he had kept the law from his young up, for the simple reason that no man has done such a thing (Rom. 3:19-23; Gal. 3:10; Jam. 2:10-11). In His reply to the rich young ruler, the Christ was exposing the sinful condition of the young man’s heart and his deceit in thinking that he was righteous. Christ was using the law for its divinely-intended purpose, which is to reveal man’s sin and to lead him to repentance and faith in the Gospel.

(6) Origen brazenly tampered with the text of Scripture.

- (a) Consider the testimony of Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney: “Origen exercised a powerful influence over the transmission of the Greek text in the period before some of the most ancient copies now in existence were written. ... HE WAS THE GREAT CORRUPTER, AND THE SOURCE, OR AT LEAST THE CHANNEL, OF NEARLY ALL THE SPECULATIVE ERRORS WHICH PLAGUED THE CHURCH IN AFTER AGES. Nolan asserts that the most characteristic discrepancies between the common Greek text and the texts current in Palestine and Egypt in Origen’s day are distinctly traceable to a Marcionite or Valentinian source, and that ORIGEN’S WAS THE MEDIATING HAND FOR INTRODUCING THESE CORRUPTIONS INTO THE LATTER TEXTS. IT IS HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT THAT IMPORTANT TEXTS BEARING ON THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE, WHICH APPEAR IN THE GREEK AND LATIN ARE LACKING IN THE OLD MSS OF THE PALESTINIAN AND EGYPTIAN. The disputed texts were designed to condemn and refute the errors of the Ebionites and Gnostics, Corinthians and Nicolaitanes. It is not surprising that the influence of Origen should result in the suppression of some of these authentic testimonies in the Greek copies, while the old Latin which circulated in areas not much affected by Origen’s influence, should preserve such a reading as that found in 1 John 5:7” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).
- (b) Of Origen’s textual efforts, Frederick Nolan makes the following important observation: “... HE CONTRIBUTED TO WEAKEN THE AUTHORITY OF THE RECEIVED TEXT OF THE NEW [TESTAMENT]. In the course of his Commentaries, he cited the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, on the former part of the Canon, he appealed to the authority of Valentinus and Heracleon on the latter. WHILE HE THUS RAISED THE CREDIT OF THOSE REVISALS, WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BY THE HERETICKS, HE DETRACTED FROM THE AUTHORITY OF THAT TEXT WHICH HAD BEEN RECEIVED BY THE ORTHODOX. Some difficulties which he found himself unable to solve in the Evangelists, he undertook to remove, BY EXPRESSING HIS DOUBTS OF THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT. In some instances he ventured to impeach the reading of the New Testament on the testimony of the Old, and to convict the copies of one Gospel on the evidence of another: *thus giving loose to his fancy, and indulging in many wild conjectures, HE CONSIDERABLY IMPAIRED THE CREDIT OF THE VULGAR OR COMMON EDITION, as well in the New as in the Old Testament*” (emphasis added) (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 432-34).

(7) Origen’s textual work is used to support the Alexandrian text preferred by modern textual critics. He is treated by them with great respect.

- (a) Origen is mentioned repeatedly and favorably by modern textual critics. For example, he is mentioned on 12 pages of Kurt and Barbara Aland's *The Text of the New Testament* and on four pages of Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, corruption, and Restoration*. These prominent textual critics see Origen in a positive light rather than as a corruptor of God's Word.
- (b) The Alands call him "the most significant and widely influential Greek theologian of the early Church..." (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 181). They call Origen's Alexandrian School "most impressive" (p. 200). Metzger calls him "one of the most assiduous and erudite scholars of his age" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 151).
- (c) Influential textual critic Frederic Kenyon testified that the Alexandrian family of manuscripts "makes its first appearance in the writings of Origen" and that it "is now generally regarded as a text produced in Egypt and probably at Alexandria under editorial care..." (*The Text of the Greek Bible*, pp. 151, 208).
- (d) The Codex Sinaiticus was corrected in the Old Testament according to Origen's work (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 23).
- (e) It is possible that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are two of the 50 copies of the Bible that were copied under the direction of Origen's disciple Eusebius at the command of Constantine, the father of church statism. This was believed by Constantine Tischendorf, F.J.A. Hort, Alexander Souter, Edward Miller, Caspar Gregory, and A.T. Robertson, among others. T.C. Skeat of the British Museum believed that Vaticanus was a "reject" among the 50 copies (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 48).

g. **EUSEBIUS** (270-340 A.D.) was another influential name in Alexandria.

- (1) He collected the writings of Origen and promoted his false teachings. "Eusebius worshiped at the altar of Origen's teachings. He claims to have collected eight hundred of Origen's letters, to have used Origen's six-column Bible, the *Hexapla*, in his Biblical labours. Assisted by Pamphilus, he restored and preserved Origen's library" (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, p. 130). Eusebius "founded at Caesarea a library of biblical and patristic writings on papyrus rolls, the nucleus of which consisted of Origen's voluminous writings, especially his editions and interpretations of biblical books" (Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 23).
- (2) Eusebius produced 50 Greek Bibles for Constantine, father of the church state. These copies were to "be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner" (Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 181). As we have seen, many modern textual critics believe that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are two of the copies made under the direction of Eusebius.

(3) Frederick Nolan and other authorities have charged Eusebius with making many changes in the text of Scripture. Nolan charged Eusebius with removing Mark 16:9-20 and John 8:1-11, among other things. “As it is thus apparent that Eusebius wanted [lacked] not the power, so it may be shewn that he wanted not the will, to make those alterations in the sacred text, with which I have ventured to accuse him. ... The works of those early writers lie under the positive imputation of being corrupted. The copies of Clement and Origen were corrupted in their life time; the manuscripts from which Tertullian’s works have been printed are notoriously faulty; and the copies of Cyprian demonstrate their own corruption, by their disagreement among themselves, and their agreement with different texts and revisals of Scripture. It is likewise indisputable, that these fathers not only followed each other, adopting the arguments and quotations of one another; but that they quoted from the heterodox as well as the orthodox. They were thus likely to transmit from one to another erroneous quotations, originally adopted from sources not more pure than heretical revisals of Scripture. ... New revisals of Scripture were thus formed, which were interpolated with the peculiar readings of scholiasts and fathers. NOR DID THIS SYSTEMATIC CORRUPTION TERMINATE HERE; BUT WHEN NEW TEXTS WERE THUS FORMED, THEY BECAME THE STANDARD BY WHICH THE LATER COPIES OF THE EARLY WRITERS WERE IN SUCCESSION CORRECTED” (Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 35, 326-332).

- h. As we have already seen, Alexandria was the source, and for sometime the principal stronghold, of the heresy of **ARIANISM**. Arius was an elder in the church at Alexandria around 315 A.D. Arianism arose in Alexandria and spread rapidly in that area and to regions beyond.
- i. And what New Testament text was used in Alexandria, Egypt? As we have already noted, it was the Alexandrian text that is favored by the modern textual critics and the translators of the modern Bible versions.

## 5. The opposing school at **ANTIOCH**.

Here we move for a moment from Egypt to Syria where the great missionary church was located at Antioch. “Antioch soon became a central point for the diffusion of Christianity among the Gentiles, and maintained for several centuries a high rank in the Christian world” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*). The *McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia* claims that the “theological seminary” at Antioch was established at the end of the 4th century, but that was only in a more formal sense, and it is admitted even in that volume that the school “had been prepared for a century before by the learned presbyters of the Church” (McClintock & Strong). In fact, the church at Antioch was a serious Christian discipleship and missionary training school from its inception. The principles that Paul taught pertaining to the thorough training of Christian workers (2 Tim. 2:2) and the necessity of pastors being grounded in the faithful Word (Titus 1:9) would no doubt have been practiced at

Antioch, his sending church.

- a. Ignatius was a prominent pastor at Antioch until his death in the early part of the 2nd century. It is probable that he, along with Polycarp, knew the apostle John and had heard him preach. Ignatius was martyred in Rome between 107 and 115 A.D. by being thrown to the wild beasts.
- b. Theophilus was a prominent pastor at Antioch in the second half of the second century, having been ordained in about 170 A.D. He died in about 193 A.D. He was converted to Christ from heathenism by studying the Scriptures and wrote an apology for the Christian faith in the form of three letters to his friend Autolycus that are still extant. “The work shows much learning and more simplicity of mind” and “contains a more detailed examination of the evidence for Christianity, derived both from Scripture and from history” (*McClintock & Strong*). Theophilus was the author of other works, including writings against the heresies of Marcion and Hermogenes, a commentary on the Gospels (still extant in Latin), and a commentary on the book of Proverbs.
- c. Dorotheus was a pastor at Antioch at the end of the 3rd century. According to Eusebius, Dorotheus was “much devoted to the study of the Hebrew language, so that he read the Hebrew Scriptures with great facility” and could be heard in the church “expounding the Scriptures with great judgment.”
- d. While the school at Alexandria was promoting Gnosticism and allegoricalism, Antioch was promoting faithfulness to the apostolic teaching and the literal method of Bible interpretation. “As distinguished from the school of Alexandria, its tendency was logical rather than intuitional or mystical” (*McClintock & Strong*). Wilbur Pickering observes that this fact has serious implications in regard to the issue of texts and translations, because “a literalist is obliged to be concerned about the precise wording of the text since his interpretation or exegesis hinges upon it.” He notes that the 1,000 extant manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta “are unparalleled for their consistency” and that “it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Antiochian antipathy toward the Alexandrian allegorical interpretation of Scripture would rather indispose them to view with favor any completing forms of the text coming out of Egypt” (*Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5).
- e. Antioch long resisted Roman Catholic doctrinal novelties, such as Mary as the mother of God and purgatory and infant baptism and reverence for relics, but gradually the Antioch church weakened, became affected by Arian heresy at one point, and eventually submitted to Rome.
- f. What text of the New Testament was used at Antioch? The text of the church at Antioch was the Traditional Text. This is why Hort called the Received Text “the Antiochan text” and “the Syrian text.” Hort said, “The fundamental text of the late extant Greek

MSS. generally is, beyond all question, identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian text of the second half of the IVth century” (Westcott and Hort, *The Greek New Testament*, Introduction, p. 92). John Burgon, who looked carefully into the history of the early biblical text and particularly into the writings of “church fathers” (his index of quotations from early church leaders handled more than 86,000 references), testified that the New Testament text used by Chrysostom (a pastor at Antioch until A.D. 398, when he moved to Constantinople) was practically identical to that of the Traditional Text of the Reformation (*The Revision Revised*, p. 296).

6. The great persecutions instigated by the Roman Emperors is another important fact pertaining to these early centuries of the church age that touches on the issue of Bible texts and versions.

- a. Under these persecutions not only were Christians put to death but also their Scriptures and writings were systematically destroyed. The most severe of the campaigns was that under Diocletian (A.D. 284-305). “...the period of persecution which lasted almost ten years in the West and much longer in the East was characterized by the systematic destruction of church buildings (and church centers), and any manuscripts that were found in them were publicly burned. ... The persecution by Diocletian left a deep scar not only in church history but also in the history of the New Testament text” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 65, 70).
- b. The Diocletian persecution was most effective in the Byzantine area. This is doubtless one reason why so few Greek Byzantine manuscripts from that era have survived.
- c. The period following the persecutions is an important one in the history of the transmission of the New Testament text. This is recognized by some modern textual critics, though they do not properly understand the implications, not viewing this history through the eyes of faith. Consider this statement by Kurt and Barbara Aland: “Innumerable manuscripts were destroyed during the persecutions and had to be replaced. The result was a widespread scarcity of New Testament manuscripts which became all the more acute when the persecution ceased. For when Christianity could again engage freely in missionary activity there was a tremendous growth in both the size of the existing churches and the number of new churches. There also followed a sudden demand for large numbers of New Testament manuscripts in all provinces of the empire” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 65).
- d. What New Testament text came out of these persecutions to become the missionary text as the churches again multiplied freely? It was the Traditional Text! Can we not see the preserving hand of God here? Wilbur Pickering observes: “...if, as reported, the Diocletian campaign was most fierce and effective in the Byzantine area, the numerical advantage of the ‘Byzantine’ text-type over the ‘Western’ and ‘Alexandrian’ would have been reduced, giving the latter a chance to forge ahead. BUT IT DID NOT HAPPEN. THE CHURCH, IN THE MAIN, REFUSED TO

PROPAGATE THOSE FORMS OF THE GREEK TEXT” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).

7. The Greek language began to die out as a living language in areas outside of Asia Minor and Greece in the late second century. “Aland argues that before 200 the tide had begun to turn against the use of Greek in the areas that spoke Latin, Syriac or Coptic, and fifty years later the changeover to the local languages was well advanced” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5). Some of the Papyri found in Egypt and published in the 1930s and 1950s show evidence that the scribes did not know Greek; they had to copy letter by letter and made many nonsensical mistakes.

8. What do these facts from the 2nd to the 4th centuries have to do with the modern Bible versions?

- a. The Westcott-Hort principle that “oldest is best” in regard to Greek New Testament manuscripts is proven to be bogus. In light of the conditions that existed in the Post-Apostolic centuries, “oldest” means absolutely nothing in regard to the purity of New Testament manuscripts. An ancient Greek manuscript could as easily represent a corrupted text as it could a pure one, and if it came from Egypt, the likelihood that it is corrupt is multiplied greatly.
- b. What the extant Greek manuscripts, ancient versions, and quotations from “church fathers” reveal is exactly what we would expect to find in light of what we know about the first four centuries of the church age. We find on one hand that there was a settled text arising from the region of Syria, Greece, and Asia Minor, the one called the Traditional or Byzantine Text; and on the other hand there was a separate group of abnormal texts arising particularly in Egypt that represent not one text type after the fashion of the Traditional Text but a bewildering variety of contradictory texts outside of the mainstream. Hort’s contention that the abnormal text is the pure one whereas the stable text is the impure flies in the face of God’s promises. “What we find upon consulting the witnesses is just such a picture. We have the Majority Text, or the Traditional Text, dominating the stream of transmission with a few individual witnesses going their idiosyncratic ways. We have already seen that the notion of ‘text-types’ and recensions, as defined and used by Hort and his followers, is gratuitous. Epp’s notion of ‘streams’ fares no better. There is only one stream, with a number of small eddies along the edges. When I say the Majority Text dominates the stream, I mean it is represented in about 95% of the MSS. ... The argument from statistical probability enters here with a vengeance. Not only do the extant MSS present us with one text form enjoying a 95% majority, but the remaining 5% do not represent a single competing text form. The minority MSS disagree as much (or more) among themselves as they do with the majority. For any two of them to agree so closely as do P75 and B [Vaticanus] is *an oddity*. We are not judging, therefore, between two text forms, one representing 95% of the MSS and the other 5%. Rather,



we have to judge between 95% and a fraction of 1% (comparing the Majority Text with the P75, B text form for example). Or to take a specific case, in 1 Tim. 3:16 some 600 Greek MSS (besides the Lectionaries) read ‘God’ while only seven read something else. Of those seven, three have private readings and four agree in reading “who.” So we have to judge between 99% and 0.6%, ‘God’ versus ‘who’” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*).

- c. The “Antiochian text” has the best claim to purity. Asia Minor was where the apostolic churches were located; it is where Greek was spoken natively. Egypt, on the other hand was a hotbed of anti-christ heresy and Gnostic fanaticism. “The use of such designations as ‘Syrian,’ ‘Antiochian,’ and ‘Byzantine’ for the Majority Text reflects its general association with that region. I know of no reason to doubt that the ‘Byzantine’ text is in fact the form of the text that was known and transmitted in the Aegean area from the beginning. In sum, I believe that the evidence clearly favors that interpretation of the history of the text which sees the normal transmission of the text as centered in the Aegean region, the area that was best qualified, from every point of view, to transmit the text, from the very first. The result of that normal transmission is the ‘Byzantine’ text-type. In every age, including the second and third centuries, it has been the traditional text” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).
  - d. The ancient Greek manuscripts most favored by modern textual criticism are Egyptian. This includes Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, Ephraem Syrus, Freer Washington, the Beatty Papyri, and the Bodmer Papyri (Pickering, *Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 6). Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are even thought by some to be two of the Bibles that Eusebius produced for Constantine.
- (1) The testimony of Edward Miller: “Now there are various reasons for supposing that B and Aleph were amongst these fifty manuscripts [created by Eusebius for Constantine in A.D. 330-340]. ... These manuscripts are unrivalled for the beauty of their vellum and for their other grandeur, and are just what we should expect to find amongst such as would be supplied in obedience to an imperial command, and executed with the aid of imperial resources. ... They abound in omissions, and show marks of such carelessness as would attend an order carried out with more than ordinary expedition. And even the corrector, who always followed the copyist, did his work with similar carelessness to the scribe whom he was following. ... There is therefore very considerable foundation for the opinion entertained by many that these two celebrated manuscripts owe their execution to the order of Constantine, and show throughout the effects of the care of Eusebius, and the influence of Origen, whose works formed the staple of the Library of Pamphilus, in the city where they were most likely written. Such was probably the parentage, and such the production of these two celebrated manuscripts, which are the main exponents of a form of Text differing from that

which has come down to us from the Era of Chrysostom, and has since that time till very recent years been recognized as mainly supreme in the Church” (Miller, *A Guide to Textual Criticism*, 1886, pp. 82, 83). See also Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 164, 165.

- (2) The testimony of A.T. Robertson: “It is quite possible that Aleph and B are two of these fifty” (Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 1925, p. 80).
  - (3) The testimony of Caspar Gregory: “This Manuscript [Vaticanus] is supposed, as we have seen, to have come from the same place as the Sinaitic Manuscript. I have said that these two show connections with each other, and that they would suit very well as a pair of the fifty manuscripts written at Caesarea for Constantine the Great” (Gregory, *The Canon and Text of the New Testament*, p. 345).
  - (4) T.C. Skeat of the British Museum told Bruce Metzger that he felt codex Vaticanus was a “reject” among the fifty copies, “for it is deficient in the Eusebian canon tables, has many corrections by different scribes, and ... lacks the books of Maccabees apparently through an oversight” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 48).
- e. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are associated with the aforementioned spurious epistles such as the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas.
  - f. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus contain many readings that denigrate the full deity of Jesus Christ and give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics.
- (1) The testimony of Robert Dabney: “The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th centuries and the copies now held in such high repute among scholars were written in the 4th and 5th centuries. THE HOSTILITY OF THESE DOCUMENTS TO THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE IMPELS THE MIND TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEIR OMISSIONS AND ALTERATIONS ARE NOT MERELY THE CHANCE ERRORS OF TRANSCRIBERS, BUT THE WORK OF A DELIBERATE HAND. When we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest in the Church, and compare it with the supposed date of these documents, our suspicion becomes much more pronounced. ... The so-called oldest codices agree with each other in omitting a number of striking testimonies to the divinity of Christ, and they also agree in other omissions relating to Gospel faith and practice” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

- (2) The testimony of John Burgon and Edward Miller: “Emphatically condemned by Ecclesiastical authority, and hopelessly outvoted by the universal voice of Christendom, buried under fifteen centuries, the corruptions I speak of survive at the present day chiefly in that little handful of copies which, calamitous to relate, the school of Lachmann and Tischendorf and Tregelles look upon as oracular: and in conformity with which many scholars are for refashioning the Evangelical text under the mistaken title of ‘Old Readings.’ ... IT IS A MEMORABLE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT IT IS PRECISELY THOSE VERY TEXTS WHICH RELATE EITHER TO THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF THE SON,--TO HIS INCARNATION,--OR TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS NATIVITY,--WHICH HAVE SUFFERED MOST SEVERELY, and retain to this hour traces of having been in various ways TAMPERED with” (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896, pp. 208, 209).

Following are some examples:

Mark 9:24 -- “Lord” is omitted in both Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Vaticanus (B)

Mark 16:9-20 -- These verses are omitted in Aleph and B, thus ending Mark’s gospel with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection and glorious ascension.

Luke 2:33 -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” Aleph, B

---- 23:42 -- “Lord” changed to “Jesus” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this powerful reference to Christ’s deity.

John 1:18 -- “the only begotten son” changed to “the only begotten God” in Aleph and B. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God. In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son.

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted by Aleph and B

---- 6:69 -- “the Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the Holy One of God” in Aleph and B

---- 9:35 -- “Son of God” changed to “Son of man” in Aleph and B.

---- 9:38 -- “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him” omitted in Aleph, thus removing this powerful and incontrovertible confession of Christ as God

---- 10:14 -- “am known of mine” is changed to “mine own know me,” thus destroying “the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which

implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature's knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father" (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*).

Acts 2:30 -- "according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ" omitted in Aleph and B, thus destroying this clear testimony that Christ himself fulfills the promise of David

---- 20:28 -- "church of God" changed to "church of the Lord" in Aleph and B; the Traditional Text says plainly that it was God who died on the cross and shed His blood, whereas the Alexandrian text allows for the heretical view that Jesus is the Lord but that he is not actually God. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, follow in the footsteps of ancient 2nd century heretics, claiming Jesus as Lord but not as God.

---- 14:10 -- "judgment seat of Christ" changed to "judgment seat of God" in Aleph and B, thus destroying this plain identification of Jesus Christ with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23)

1 Corinthians 15:47 -- "the Lord" omitted in Aleph, B

Ephesians 3:9 -- "by Jesus Christ" omitted in Aleph, B

1 Timothy 3:16 -- "God" is omitted and replaced with "who" in the Sinaiticus (the Vaticanus does not contain the epistle to Timothy)

1 John 4:3 -- "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" changed to "confesseth not Jesus" in B; every false spirit will "acknowledge Jesus" in a general sense (even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses), but the spirit of antichrist will not "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy.

- g. The Catholic Latin Vulgate is also associated with the Alexandrian text, though to a much lesser degree than the modern critical Greek text. Jerome (340-420 A.D.) used the Eusebius text in producing the Vulgate. Modern textual critic Bruce Metzger says that the Greek manuscripts used by Jerome "apparently belonged to the Alexandrian type of text" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 76). This means they were in the same general family as those underlying the modern versions. Kenyon and Robinson also believe this (Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 88; Robinson, *Ancient Versions of the English Bible*, p. 113).

- (1) Jerome was a heretic who promoted veneration of holy relics and bones and prayers to the dead; he taught that Mary was instrumental in salvation and is a perpetual virgin. He was vicious toward those with whom he disagreed (calling them dogs, maniacs, monsters, stupid fools, two-legged asses, madmen, thus

demonstrating himself as Peter Ruckman's father in the faith!). He laid the groundwork for the Catholic inquisition by arguing for "heretics" to be put to death.

- (2) The Latin Vulgate is a "part way" text, standing part way between the Traditional Text and the Alexandrian, though it is much closer to the Traditional. Following are the textual corruptions in the Latin Vulgate:

Matthew

---- 6:13 -- "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

Mark

---- 13:14 -- "spoken of by Daniel the prophet" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

Luke

---- 2:33 -- "Joseph" is changed to "the child's father" in the Alexandrian text and in the Latin Vulgate but present in the Byzantine Greek

---- 4:8 -- "get thee behind me Satan" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but present in the Byzantine Greek

1 Corinthians

---- 5:7 -- "for us" is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

---- 15:47 -- "the Lord" is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

Galatians

---- 3:17 -- "in Christ" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

Ephesians

---- 3:9 -- "by Jesus Christ" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

Colossians

---- 1:14 -- "through his blood" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

1 Timothy

---- 1:17 -- "wise" omitted in the Alexandrian and Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

---- 3:16 -- "God" omitted and replaced with "who" in the Alexandrian text and "which" in the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek.

---- 6:5 -- "from such withdraw thyself" omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek

Hebrews

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek

1 Peter

---- 2:2 -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but not in the Byzantine Greek

Revelation

---- 8:13 -- “angel” is changed to “eagle” in the Alexandrian and the Latin Vulgate but remains “angel” in the Byzantine Greek

- (3) The Catholic Church has never accepted the Traditional Byzantine Greek New Testament or the Received Greek New Testament, but today it accepts the modern critical text without qualification, has updated its Latin Vulgate on the basis of the United Bible Societies Greek text, and uses that critical Greek text for its translations.

## **THE 4TH TO 10TH CENTURIES -- THE TRADITIONAL TEXT WINS THE BATTLE**

**1. The battle against the apostolic New Testament was fierce and unrelenting, but the God who gave the Scripture kept it.** “There was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries, but there was a clear winner!” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). The modern textual critics admit that the Traditional Text won the day by the fourth century. Under the section on the Dark Ages we will show that the Bibles used by the churches, both Greek and translations, represented the Traditional Text.

**2. The persecutions by the Roman emperors having ceased under Constantine (311 A.D.), the churches again had liberty to preach and carry out missionary work, and they did this with great enthusiasm.** Though most of the record of this work of faith has perished, we do know that translations were made in those days by missionaries and were used widely and we know that they represented the Traditional Text.

### **a. The Gothic Bible (c. 350 A.D.)**

- (1) This influential translation was a missionary Bible. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries the warring Goths or Visigoths swept down from Scandinavia to southeastern Europe, north of the Lower Danube and west of the Black Sea, and from here they raided the crumbling Roman Empire. In 410 A.D. they invaded Rome itself.
- (2) In an invasion into Cappadocia, in Asia Minor, they took captive the grandparents of Ulfilas or Wulfila (“little wolf”), who lived from 311-383. God touched the heart of this man to carry the Gospel to the very people who had enslaved his grandparents, and he became known as “the Apostle to the Goths.” His burden was to translate the Bible into the Goth language, and for this purpose he invented an alphabet from Greek, Latin, and Germanic runic. And

since there were not Gothic words for many Bible terms, he extended the language so that the Word of God could be translated properly. One thousand years later John Wycliffe did the same thing for the English language.

- (3) The Gothic version was widely used across much of Europe, including France, Spain, northern Italy, and Germany. “About a century after the death of Ulfilas, the Ostrogothic chief Theodoric invaded northern Italy and founded a mighty empire, the Visigoths being already in possession of Spain. Since the use of Ulfilas’ version can be traced among the Goths of both countries, IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE VERNACULAR BIBLE OF A LARGE PORTION OF EUROPE. Many manuscripts of the version were certainly produced during the fifth and sixth centuries in the writing schools of northern Italy and elsewhere, but only eight copies, most of them quite fragmentary, have survived. ... The Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy was of relatively brief duration (A.D. 488-554), and by the middle of the sixth century it was overthrown, succumbing to the power of the eastern Roman Empire. The survivors left Italy, and the Gothic language disappeared leaving scarcely a trace” (emphasis added) (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 377, 78).
- (4) Sadly, only a few fragments remain of this ancient missionary Bible and even those fragments are largely palimpsests, meaning the original Gothic has been scraped off and overwritten with something else. But what is known of the Gothic version demonstrates that it is representative of the Traditional Text. Frederick Kenyon said, “The type of text represented in it, is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts.” Jack Moorman observes: “His translation was taken directly from the kind of Greek manuscripts found in the vast majority today. This witnesses powerfully to the fact that in 350 there were many Traditional Text MSS, and that these had long held a place of esteem among God’s people. Ulfilas’ roots in Asia Minor, should also be noted here. The path from Antioch, to Asia Minor, to the world beyond was the route of the God-honoured Text” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 45).

b. The Slavonic Bible (c. 850 A.D.)

- (1) The translation of the Slavonic Bible was begun in the 9th century by two brothers, Cyril Constantine (d. 869) and Methodius (d. 885), who were missionaries to the “half savage” Slavonians. They were from the Byzantine Greek empire, which prior to the schism from Rome in 1054 was “being revitalized by successful missions among the Russians, Bulgars, and Slavs” (*Byzantine Empire*, <http://www.crystalinks.com/byzantine.html>). Cyril and Methodius invented an alphabet, called Cyrillic, and began the translation. The invention of the alphabet and the publication of books in Slovenian resulted

in the spread of literacy and in the Christianization, at least, of many Slovenians. It is difficult now to tell to what extent these missionaries preached a saving gospel of grace as opposed to a sacramental gospel. We do know that the desire to produce Bibles in indigenous languages was not characteristic of sacramental missionaries. Not only did Roman Catholic missionaries not produce native translations themselves, they did everything they could to hinder those who would produce such translations.

- (2) The Slavonic represented the Traditional Text. According to *McClintock & Strong* "The Byzantine text ... was the original from which the Slavonic version was made" (see *McClintock & Strong*, "Byzantine Recension"). The Slavonic reads, "God was manifest in the flesh," in 1 Timothy 3:16.

**3. During this period of great missionary activity the Alexandrian text was rejected with great finality and buried in the sands of Egypt, so to speak, and the Traditional text was multiplied.**

- a. I am not saying that the Alexandrian text was ever spread over a wide region or that it actually stood head to head with the Traditional Text across the biblical world. The Alexandrian text was always more of a local text.
- b. Even the modern textual critics admit that the Vaticanus type text ceased to be used, attempting to account for this with their bogus recension theory. Consider the surviving uncial manuscripts. Of the roughly 260 extant uncials, most of them are from the 5th to the 10th centuries, and for the most part these "actually preserve little more than a purely or predominantly Byzantine Majority text" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 103). It is only a handful of the uncials from before this time that exhibits the strangely unstable Alexandrian text.
- c. The only churches that did not use the Traditional Text were some in Egypt (Coptic? -----)

**4. At this point we need to consider the issue of the hand copying of manuscripts as it affects the history of Bible texts and versions.**

Throughout this period from the Apostles in the 1st century to the invention of printing in the 15th, the Scriptures were copied by hand.

- a. There were different types of Greek manuscripts.

- (1) They were written on different types of material.

- (a) **PAPYRUS** manuscripts were made from the papyrus plant that grew alongside rivers in Egypt (and a few others places). "The papyrus plant grew



to a height of six meters [18 feet] ... Its thick stem was divided into sections and sharp tools were used to cut it lengthwise into wafer-thin strips. These strips were laid side by side to form a single layer with the fibers of the pith running in parallel, and on top of it a second layer was placed with the fibers running at right angles to the first. The two layers were then moistened, pressed together, and smoothed down. Finally, any projecting fibers were trimmed off and the papyrus sheet was cut to a desired size. The product did not have the brown to dark brown color we are familiar with from the samples of papyrus in museum showcases, but ranged from a light gray to a light yellow (the darker color results from centuries under the Egyptian sands). Nor was it at all as fragile as surviving samples appear, but sufficiently flexible for sheets to be pasted together in rolls of up to ten meters in length, to be written on and have a useful library life of several decades” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 75). Papyrus was used from the 1st to the 10th centuries.

- (b) **PARCHMENT OR VELLUM** was made of animal skins. “Vellum properly means ‘calfskin’ [the word veal is related to it], but the term was later applied to other skins of finer quality as well. The word ‘parchment’ comes from the name of the city Pergamus, which was noted for the quality of parchment produced there. The term was originally used to denote skins of lesser quality than the finer vellum. Now, however, the two terms are commonly used interchangeably” (J. Harold Greenlee, *Scribes, Scrolls, and Scriptures*, p. 10). “The hide (theoretically of any animal, but usually of a sheep or goat) first had the hair and flesh removed by a solution of lime mordant, and was then trimmed to size, polished, and smoothed with chalk and pumice stone to prepare the surface for use” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 76). To produce a N.T. on vellum required the hides of about 60 sheep or goats. Vellum was not used for New Testament writings until the fourth century. Edward Miller was one of the first to point this out: “If vellum had been in constant use over the Roman Empire during the first three centuries and a third which elapsed before B and Aleph were written, there ought to have been in existence some remains of a material so capable of resisting the tear and wear of use and time. As there are no vellum MSS. at all except the merest fragments dating from before 330 A.D., we are perforce driven to infer that a material for writing of a perishable nature was generally employed before that period” (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of the Corruption of The Traditional Text*, 1896, p. 156). Kurt and Barbara Aland add, “Parchment did not come into use as a writing material for the New Testament until the fourth century--in the meanwhile papyrus was the rule...” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 85).

- (c) **PAPER** began to be used extensively in the 12th century (the earliest extant Greek manuscript on paper is from the ninth). Roughly 1,300 of the extant Greek manuscripts are written on paper (2 uncials, 698 minuscules, and 587 lectionaries) (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 77).

(2) They were written in different forms of letters.

- (a) **UNCIAL** manuscripts (also called *majuscules*) were written in all capital letters with no space between words and little or no punctuation. (The name *uncial* is from the Latin word *uncialis*, which means inch-high.) There are about 263 uncials extant, dating from the 2nd to the 11th centuries. Many of the most ancient are fragments. Only five contain the whole or nearly the whole New Testament (Aland, *The Text of the N.T.*, p. 78).

Uncial writing in Greek and English would look like this in Philippians 1:1-2:

PAULOSKAITIMOQEOSDOULOIIHSOUCRISTOUPASITOISAGIOISEN  
CRISTWIIHSOUTOISOUSINENFILIPPOISSUNEPISKOPOISKAIDIAKO  
NOISCARISUMINKAIEIRHNHAPOQEOPATROSHMWNKAIKURIOU  
IHSOUCRISTOU

PAULANDTIMOTHEUSTHESERVANTSOFGESUSCHRISTTOALLTHES  
AINTSINCHRISTJESUSWHICHAREATPHILIPPIWITHTHEBISHOPSA  
NDDEACONSGRACEBEUNTOYOUANDPEACEFROMGODOURFATH  
ERANDFROMTHELORDJESUSCHRIST

- (b) **MINISCULE** manuscripts (also called *cursive*) are written in the modern style of writing, in lower and upper case with some punctuation and spaces between the words, and thus are much easier to read and interpret than the uncials. There are roughly 2,812 minuscule Greek manuscripts extant (about 203 contain the whole or nearly the whole N.T.) The minuscules date from the ninth century forward, but the cursive style of writing dates to at least three centuries before Christ (Burton and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 157).

(3) They were bound in different ways.

- (a) Some were made into **SCROLLS**. A papyrus scroll of the Gospel of Matthew was about 30 feet in length. A scroll of the entire New Testament would have been about 200 feet. The *Isaiah A* scroll found in the first Dead Sea cave is written on parchment and is about 24-feet long. Therefore, Scriptures written as scrolls were distributed only in portions.

- (b) Some were made in to **BOOKS** (called *codexes* or *codices*). The sheets were stacked together and sewn at the edge. Christians used books from the beginning.
- b. Types of errors that crept into the manuscripts through hand copying. (For more about this see *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* by John Burgon and Edward Miller (1896), which is available from the Dean Burgon Society, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).)
- (1) Errors resulting from the omissions of words and phrases or entire lines. The most common mistake in copying is to skip over a word or phrase. Sometimes the eye will lose its place and skip over an entire line.
  - (2) Errors resulting from adding words or phrases. Sometimes a copyist will carelessly copy a word or phrase twice when the mind wanders.
  - (3) Errors of misspelling and such. The word “Bethesda” (Jn. 5:2) is spelled 30 different ways in various manuscripts (*The Revision Revised*, p. 5).
  - (4) Errors resulting from mistaking one word for another. This was especially easy to do when copying uncials that were in all caps. Some Greek letters and many words are similar to others.
  - (5) Errors resulting from wrong word division. The uncials did not have divisions between the words, so it was easy for a copyist to make the division in the wrong place. For example, GODISNOWHERE could be GOD IS NOWHERE or GOD IS NOW HERE.
  - (6) Errors resulting from faulty memory. It is not uncommon for a copyist to try to copy a portion from memory and to make a mistake because his memory is inaccurate.
  - (7) As we have seen, there were also errors that were produced by malicious tampering. “In the age which immediately succeeded the Apostolic there were heretical teachers not a few, who finding their tenets refuted by the plain Word of God bent themselves against the written Word with all their power. From seeking to evacuate its teaching, it was but a single step to seeking to falsify its testimony” (John Burgon and Edward Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896).
- c. How can such errors be weeded out of the manuscript record? Generally speaking, it is not that difficult to find and correct scribal errors by comparing manuscripts. One

of the assignments for this course is for each student to write the first three chapters of the Gospel of John by hand, then count the mistakes and see what sort they are. By comparing all of the copies made by the students in one class, it will become evident that normal copying errors can be corrected with relative ease. For example, if a word is omitted or misspelled by one student, it will probably be correct in the other copies. Likewise, if a heretic tried to add or omit something to the text to support his doctrine, this can be detected by comparing all of the copies together. This can be illustrated easily. If one of the students in this course decided to add or omit something as he was copying John 1-3 this would be detected as his copy was compared to the others. Whether the addition or omission was made maliciously or merely as a joke or for some other reason, it could be detected with relative ease by a comparison of manuscripts.

**5. The CONVERSION OF THE UNCIAL MANUSCRIPTS TO THE CURSIVE STYLE was a very important event during this period under discussion (the 4th to the 10th centuries).**

- a. It is only reasonable to assume that the conversion process required a critical examination that only those uncials considered the most authentic would be used, perhaps not in every case but broadly speaking across the spectrum of the entire process. Surely those involved in this important process knew that the times had changed and that the uncials would no longer be used, that the conversion process would not be reversed, just as those who lived in the 15th and 16th centuries knew that the conversion from manuscript to print was permanent. Jakob van Bruggen has made the following valuable observation about this era: “In the codicology the great value of the transliteration process in the 9th century and thereafter is recognized. At that time the most important New Testament manuscripts written in majuscule script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script. ... The import of this datum has not been taken into account enough in the present New Testament textual criticism. For it implies that just the oldest, best and most customary manuscripts come to us in the new uniform of the minuscule script, does it not?” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, p. 26).
- b. It is important to understand that that the manuscript record was far more ancient and extensive in that day than in our day. So much of the record that was then extant was destroyed during the tumultuous, persecution-filled millennium that has passed since that day. Jack Moorman observes: “Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century [only a few hundred years after the apostles] would be in a better position to decide on the ‘oldest and best manuscripts’ than textual critics of the Twentieth? Why during this changeover did they so decisively reject the text of Vaticanus and instead make copies of that text which now underlies the A.V.?” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 26).

- b. The conversion process of the 9th and 10th centuries also teaches us that ancient uncials were once extant that contained the Traditional Text. “Even though one continues to maintain that the copyists at the time of the transliteration handed down the wrong text-type to the Middle Ages, one can still never prove this codicologically with the remark that the older majuscules have a different text. This would be circular reasoning. There certainly were majuscules just as venerable and ancient as the surviving Vaticanus or Sinaiticus, which, like a section of the Alexandrinus, presented a Byzantine text. But they have been renewed into minuscule script and their majuscule appearance has vanished” (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, p. 27).

**6. Another important factor in the preservation of the Greek New Testament during this era was THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, which kept the Greek manuscripts from the 5th to the 15th centuries.**

- a. The Greek language began to die out as a living language in areas outside of Asia Minor and Greece in the late second century. “Aland argues that before 200 the tide had begun to turn against the use of Greek in the areas that spoke Latin, Syriac or Coptic, and fifty years later the changeover to the local languages was well advanced” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 5).
- b. During the Dark Ages, when Greek was not a common language outside of the Byzantine part of the world and Latin dominated scholarship, the Greek manuscripts were guarded by Orthodox scholars.
- c. Byzantine Greek manuscripts were subsequently transmitted to Europe in 1453 at the fall of Constantinople, at almost exactly the same time that Gutenberg printed the first Bible with movable type. Does anyone think this was a mere coincident?
- d. Though there are slight differences between the Byzantine Greek manuscripts, they are generally amazingly uniform, especially when compared to the Alexandrian manuscripts that differ wildly one from another.

**THE DARK AGES (11TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY) -- THE PERSECUTION OF THE BIBLE**

1. During the period when the Roman Catholic Church was in power, she did everything she could to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people. It was illegal to translate the Bible into the common languages, even though most people could not read the official Catholic Bible because it was in Latin, a language known only to the highly educated. (I am using the term “Dark Ages” to describe the entire period when Rome ruled Europe and England. I realize that it is common today to use this term only in reference to a portion of that period, but in my estimation a better term could not be devised to describe the entirety of Rome’s rule.)

- a. Consider some of the laws Rome made against Bible translation. These began to be made in the 13th century and were in effect through the 19th.
  - (1) In the year 1215 **POPE INNOCENT III** issued a law commanding “that they shall be seized for trial and penalties, WHO ENGAGE IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED VOLUMES, or who hold secret conventicles, or who assume the office of preaching without the authority of their superiors; against whom process shall be commenced, without any permission of appeal” (J.P. Callender, *Illustrations of Popery*, 1838, p. 387). Innocent “declared that as by the old law, the beast touching the holy mount was to be stoned to death, so simple and uneducated men were not to touch the Bible or venture to preach its doctrines” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p. 723).
  - (2) The **COUNCIL OF TOULOUSE** (1229) FORBADE THE LAITY TO POSSESS OR READ THE VERNACULAR TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE (Pierre Allix, *Remarks on the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses*, II, 1692, p. 213). This council ordered that the bishops should appoint in each parish “one priest and two or three laics, who should engage upon oath to make a rigorous search after all heretics and their abettors, and for this purpose should visit every house from the garret to the cellar, together with all subterraneous places where they might conceal themselves” (Thomas M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, 1856, p. 82). They also searched for the illegal Bibles.
  - (3) The **COUNCIL OF TARRAGONA** (1234) “ORDERED ALL VERNACULAR VERSIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE BISHOP TO BE BURNED” (Paris Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, p. 1929, 162).
  - (4) In 1483 the infamous Inquisitor General Thomas Torquemada began his reign of terror as head of **THE SPANISH INQUISITION; King Ferdinand and his queen** “PROHIBITED ALL, UNDER THE SEVEREST PAINS, FROM TRANSLATING THE SACRED SCRIPTURE INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES, OR FROM USING IT WHEN TRANSLATED BY OTHERS” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 192). For more than three long centuries the Bible in the common tongue was a forbidden book in Catholic Spain and multitudes of copies perished in the flames, together with those who cherished them.
  - (5) In England, too, laws were passed by the Catholic authorities against vernacular Bibles. The **CONSTITUTIONS OF ARUNDEL**, issued in 1408 by Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel, made this brash demand: “WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS

OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF THE SCRIPTURE INTO ENGLISH, OR ANY OTHER TONGUE, by way of a book, libel, or treatise, now lately set forth in the time of John Wycliff, or since, or hereafter to be set forth, in part of in whole, privily or apertly, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial” (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, vol. 1, 1876, p. 89). Consider Arundel’s estimation of the man who gave the English speaking people their first Bible: “This pestilential and most wretched John Wycliffe of damnable memory, a child of the old devil, and himself a child or pupil of Anti-Christ, who while he lived, walking in the vanity of his mind ... crowned his wickedness by translating the Scriptures into the mother tongue” (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe: The Dawn of the Reformation*, p. 45).

- (6) Pope Leo X (1513-1521), who railed against Luther’s efforts to follow the biblical precept of faith alone and Scripture alone, called the **FIFTH LATERAN COUNCIL** (1513-1517), which charged that no books should be printed except those approved by the Roman Catholic Church. “THEREFORE FOREVER THEREAFTER NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PRINT ANY BOOK OR WRITING WITHOUT A PREVIOUS EXAMINATION, TO BE TESTIFIED BY MANUAL SUBSCRIPTION, BY THE PAPAL VICAR AND MASTER OF THE SACRED PALACE IN ROME, and in other cities and dioceses by the Inquisition, and the bishop or an expert appointed by him. FOR NEGLECT OF THIS THE PUNISHMENT WAS EXCOMMUNICATION, THE LOSS OF THE EDITION, WHICH WAS TO BE BURNED, a fine of 100 ducats to the fabric of St. Peters, and suspension from business for a year” (Henry Lea, *The Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, 1906).
- (7) These restrictions were repeated by the **COUNCIL OF TRENT** in 1546, which placed translations of the Bible in the vernacular, such as the German, Spanish, French, and English, on its list of prohibited books and forbade any person to read the Bible without a license from a Catholic bishop or inquisitor.
  - (a) Following is a quote from Trent: “...IT SHALL NOT BE LAWFUL FOR ANYONE TO PRINT OR TO HAVE PRINTED ANY BOOKS WHATSOEVER DEALING WITH SACRED DOCTRINAL MATTERS WITHOUT THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR, OR IN THE FUTURE TO SELL THEM, OR EVEN TO HAVE THEM IN POSSESSION, UNLESS THEY HAVE FIRST BEEN EXAMINED AND APPROVED BY THE ORDINARY, UNDER PENALTY OF ANATHEMA AND FINE prescribed by the last Council of the Lateran” (Fourth session, April 8, 1546, *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Translated by H.J. Schroeder, pp. 17-19).

- (b) These rules were affixed to Rome's Index of Prohibited Books and were constantly reaffirmed by Popes in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. These prohibitions, in fact, have never been rescinded. It is true that the Council of Trent did not absolutely forbid the reading of the Scriptures under all circumstances. It allowed a few exceptions. The priests were allowed to read the Latin Bible. Bishops and inquisitors were allowed to grant license for certain faithful Catholics to read the Scriptures in Latin as long as these Scriptures were accompanied by Catholic notes and if it was believed that these would not be "harmed" by such reading. *In practice, though, the proclamations of Trent forbade the reading of the Holy Scriptures to vast majority of the people.* Rome's claim to possess authority to determine who can and cannot translate, publish, and read the Bible is one of the most blasphemous claims ever made under this sun.
  - (c) The attitude of 16th century Catholic authorities toward the Bible was evident from a speech Richard Du Mans delivered at the Council of Trent, in which he said "that *the Scriptures had become useless*, since the schoolmen had established the truth of all doctrines; and though they were formerly read in the church, for the instruction of the people, and still read in the service, yet *they ought not to be made a study, because the Lutherans only gained those who read them*" (William M'Gavin, *The Protestant*, 1846, p. 144). It is true that the Bible leads men away from Roman Catholicism, but this is only because Roman Catholicism is not founded upon the Word of God!
  - (d) Pope Clement VIII (1592-1605) confirmed the Council of Trent's proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112) and went even further by forbidding licenses to be granted for the reading of the Bible under any conditions (Richard Littledale, *Plain Reasons against Joining the Church of Rome*, 1924, p. 91).
- (8) The restrictions against ownership of the vernacular Scriptures were **repeated by the popes until the end of the 19th century**:
- (a) Benedict XIV (1740-1758) confirmed the Council of Trent's proclamations against Bible translations (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, II, p. 112) and issued an injunction "that no versions whatever should be suffered to be read but those which should be approved of by the Holy See, accompanied by notes derived from the writings of the Holy Fathers, or other learned and Catholic authors" (D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 479).
  - (b) It was during the reign of Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) that the modern Bible society movement began. The British and Foreign Bible Society was formed in March 1804, the purpose being "to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment." Other societies were soon created for the same exalted purpose. Germany (1804); Ireland (1806); Canada (1807); Edinburgh (1809); Hungary (1811); Finland, Glasgow, Zurich,



Prussia (1812); Russia (1813); Denmark and Sweden (1814); Netherlands, Iceland (1815); America, Norway, and Waldensian (1816); Australia, Malta, Paris (1817); etc. One of the societies began distributing a Polish Bible in Poland. The Pope, instead of praising the Lord that the eternal Word of God was being placed into the hands of spiritually needy people, showed his displeasure by issuing a bull against Bible Societies on June 29, 1816. The Pope expressed himself as “shocked” by the circulation of the Scriptures in the Polish tongue. He characterized this practice as a “most crafty device, by which the very foundations of religion are undermined,” “a pestilence,” which he must “remedy and abolish,” “a defilement of the faith, eminently dangerous to souls.” Pope Pius VII also rebuked Archbishop Buhusz of Mohilev in Russia because of his endorsement of a newly formed Bible society (Kenneth Latourette, *The Nineteenth Century in Europe*, p. 448). The papal brief, dated September 3, 1816, declared that “if the Sacred Scriptures were allowed in the vulgar tongue everywhere without discrimination, more detriment than benefit would arise” (Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Versions Compared*, p. 236).

- (c) Pope Leo XII (1823-29) issued a bull to the Bishops in Ireland, May 3, 1824, in which he affirmed the Council of Trent and condemned Bible distribution. “It is no secret to you, venerable brethren, that a certain Society, vulgarly called The Bible Society, is audaciously spreading itself through the whole world. After despising the traditions of the holy Fathers, and in opposition to the well-known Decree of the Council of Trent, this Society has collected all its forces, and directs every means to one object,—the translation, or rather the perversion, of the Bible into the vernacular languages of all nations. ... IF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES BE EVERYWHERE INDISCRIMINATELY PUBLISHED, MORE EVIL THAN ADVANTAGE WILL ARISE THENCE, on account of the rashness of men” (Bull of Leo XII, May 3, 1824; cited from Charles Elliott, *Delineation of Roman Catholicism*, 1851, p. 21). This Pope re-published the Index of Prohibited Books on March 26, 1825, and mandated that the decrees of the Council of Trent be enforced against distribution of Scriptures (R.P. Blakeney, *Popery in Its Social Aspect*, 1854, p. 137).
- (d) Pope Gregory XVI (1831-46) ratified the decrees of his predecessors, forbidding the free distribution of Scripture. In his encyclical of May 8, 1844, this Pope stated: “Moreover, we confirm and renew the decrees recited above, DELIVERED IN FORMER TIMES BY APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, AGAINST THE PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, READING, AND POSSESSION OF BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TRANSLATED INTO THE VULGAR TONGUE” (James Wylie, *The Papacy*, 1867, p. 182). This encyclical was delivered against Bible societies in general, and mentioned in particular the Christian Alliance, which was formed in 1843 in New York for the purpose of distributing Scriptures.

- (e) Pope Pius IX (1846-78) in November 1846 issued an encyclical letter in which he denounced all opponents of Roman Catholicism, among which he included “those insidious Bible Societies.” He said the Bible societies were “renewing the crafts of the ancient heretics” by distributing to “all kinds of men, even the least instructed, gratuitously and at immense expense, copies in vast numbers of the books of the Sacred Scriptures translated against the holiest rules of the Church into various vulgar tongues...” What a horrible crime! Distributing the Scriptures freely to all people! It was Pius IX who had himself and his fellow popes declared “infallible” at the Vatican I Council in 1870.
- (f) Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) published an “Apostolic Constitution” in 1897 which stated: “All versions of the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the Bishops, with annotations taken from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers” (Melancthon Jacobus, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Bibles*, p. 237).
- (g) Where the Roman Catholic Church held power the Bible was always scarce. Consider a few examples: When the government of New Orleans was taken over in 1803, “it was not till after a long search for a Bible to administer the oath of office that a Latin Vulgate was at last procured from a priest” (William Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, I, p. 245). In Quebec, as late as 1826, MANY PEOPLE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (Canton, II, 61). The situation was the same in South America, where the citizens under Rome “for about three centuries, were almost entirely without the Bible.” It was 1831 before the first Bible was printed in Spanish America, and even then the copies were exorbitantly expensive (Canton, II, 347). Thus, even when Catholic authorities finally printed some Bibles, they were priced far beyond the reach of most people. Between December 1907 and February 1908 a diligent search was made to determine how many Bibles were available in Catholic Ireland. Not a portion of the Bible was available in bookshops in Athlone, Balbriggan, Drogheda, Mullingar, Wexford, and Clonmel. A shop assistant at Mullingar said, “I never saw a Catholic Bible.” When asked about the New Testament, a sales person at The Catholic Truth Society replied, “We don’t keep it.” The extensive survey concluded “that IN NINE TENTHS OF THE CITIES, TOWNS, AND VILLAGES OR IRELAND A ROMAN CATHOLIC COULD NOT PROCURE A COPY OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC BIBLE OR NEW TESTAMENT” (Alexander Robertson, *The Papal Conquest*, 1909, pp. 166-167).
- (i) These facts uncover only the tip of iceberg in regard to Rome’s attitude toward the Bible in former times. Our book “Rome and the Bible: The History of the Bible through the Centuries and Rome’s Persecution against It” documents this more extensively. It is available from Way of Life

Literature, P.O. Box 61368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.

- b. The Waldenses (also called Vaudois or Albigenses) are an example of what occurred during this period. They lived in the mountains of Italy and France and eventually spread throughout Europe; they refused to join the Catholic Church or recognize the Pope. They received the Bible as the sole source for faith and practice and had their own translations, which they diligently reproduced in hand-written copies. Rome persecuted the Waldenses throughout the Dark Ages up until the 18th century.

- (1) A few brief descriptions of the persecutions against the Waldenses follow. Note that many entire books have been written about these persecutions and the following facts only hint at the destruction and torment poured out upon these people. [For more information, the reader's attention is invited to the *Fundamental Baptist CD-Rom Library*, which contains dozens of rare old Baptist and Waldensian histories, including *Baptist History* by John M. Cramp (1852), *The Story of the Baptists in All Ages and Countries* by Richard Cook (1888), *Memorials of Baptist Martyrs* by J. Newton Brown (1854), *A History of the Baptists* by Thomas Armitage (1890), *A History of the Christian Church (Waldenses)* by William Jones (1819), *History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont and Albigenses* by Pierre Allix (1690, 1692), *A History of the Waldenses* by J.A. Wylie (1860), and *A History of the Ancient Christians of the Valleys of the Alps* by Perrin (1618). The *Fundamental Baptist CD-Rom Library* is available from Way of Life Literature, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.]

12th Century. The Roman Catholic Church persecuted Peter Waldo and refused to accept his translation of the New Testament into the Romaunt language. Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) expelled Waldo and his followers from his diocese, and the next pope, Lucius III, put his papal curse upon them (William Blackburn, *History of the Christian Church*, 1880, pp. 309, 310). The Council of Tours in 1163 promoted inquisition against Bible believers, issuing a decree that stated: "No man must presume to receive or assist heretics, nor in buying or selling have any thing to do with them, that being thus deprived of the comforts of humanity, they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way" (Gideon Ouseley, *A Short Defence of the Old Religion*, 1821, p. 221). "Many Albigenses, refusing the terms, were burnt in different cities in the south of France" (G.H. Orchard, *A Concise History of the Baptists*, 1855, p. 199). The Third Lateran Council "gave permission to princes to reduce heretics to slavery and shortened the time of penance by two years for those taking up arms against them" (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, V, p. 519).

13th Century: In the year 1209, Pope Innocent III called for a crusade against the

Waldenses in France. Anyone who volunteered to war against the “heretics” (so called by Rome because they dissented from her dogmas) was promised forgiveness of sin and many rewards. Tens of thousands took up arms for the Pope and marched against the hated Waldenses. Some 200,000 dissenters were killed by the Pope’s army within a few months. Two large cities, Beziers (Braziers) and Carcasone, were destroyed, together with many smaller towns and villages. The war was conducted for 20 years! Thousands were made homeless and were forced to wander in the woods and mountains to escape their tormentors. The cruelties practiced by the Catholic persecutors were horrible and often unspeakable. The Christians were thrown from high cliffs, hanged, disemboweled, pierced through repeatedly, drowned, torn by dogs, burned alive, crucified. In one case, 400 mothers fled for refuge with their babies to a cave in Castelluzzo, which was located 2,000 feet above the valley in which they lived. They were discovered by the rampaging Catholics; a large fire was built outside of the cave and they were suffocated.

15th Century: In 1487 Pope Innocent VIII called for a crusade against the Waldenses in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere. He promised forgiveness of sins and a share in the plunder to those who participated. Charles VIII of France and Charles II of Savoy agreed to raise an army for the destruction of the Waldenses. This regular army, which numbered about 18,000 soldiers, was joined by thousands of “ruffians,” urged on by the promise of forgiveness of sins and the expectation of obtaining spoil from the Waldensian possessions. James Wylie describes these volunteers as “ambitious fanatics, reckless pillagers, merciless assassins” (*History of the Waldenses*, 1860, p. 29). This army attacked the Waldensian mountain valleys in northern Italy simultaneously from the plains to the south and from France to the west. Thousands of Bible-believing Christians perished in this crusade. Their homes and crops were destroyed. Many entire villages were razed. Their women were raped and then viciously murdered. Their children were dashed against trees and thrown off cliffs. More than 3,000 Waldensian Christians, men, women, and children, perished in one cave called Aigue-Froid to which they had fled for safety. These were the inhabitants of the entire village of Val Loyse, and the property of these pitiful people was distributed to the participants of the crusade. Many entire large valleys were burned and pillaged and depopulated. This crusade against the Waldensians lasted for a year.

16th Century: Following is a brief description of the persecutions in the 16th century as given by a Waldensian pastor: “There is no town in Piedmont under a Vaudois pastor, where some of our brethren have not been put to death ... Hugo Chiamps of Finestrelle had his entrails torn from his living body, at Turin. Peter Geymarali of Bobbio, in like manner, had his entrails

taken out at Lucerna, and a fierce cat thrust in their place to torture him further; Maria Romano was buried alive at Rocco-patia; Magdalen Foulano underwent the same fate at San Giovanni; Susan Michelini was bound hand and foot, and left to perish of cold and hunger at Saracena. Bartholomew Fache, gashed with sabres, had the wounds filled up with quicklime, and perished thus in agony at Fenile; Daniel Michelini had his tongue torn out at Bobbio for having praised God. James Baridari perished covered with sulphurous matches, which had been forced into his flesh under the nails, between the fingers, in the nostrils, in the lips, and over all his body, and then lighted. Daniel Revelli had his mouth filled with gunpowder, which, being lighted, blew his head to pieces. Maria Monnen, taken at Liouza, had the flesh cut from her cheek and chin bone, so that her jaw was left bare, and she was thus left to perish. Paul Garnier was slowly sliced to pieces at Rora. Thomas Margueti was mutilated in an indescribable manner at Miraboco, and Susan Jaquin cut in bits at La Torre. Sara Rostagnol was slit open from the legs to the bosom, and so left to perish on the road between Eyrat and Lucerna. Anne Charbonnier was impaled and carried thus on a pike, as a standard, from San Giovanni to La Torre. Daniel Rambaud, at Paesano, had his nails torn off, then his fingers chopped off, then his feet and his hands, then his arms and his legs, with each successive refusal on his part to abjure the Gospel” (Alex Muston, *A History of the Waldenses: The Israel of the Alps*, 1866).

(2) Not only were the Waldensian Christians themselves destroyed during these persecutions, but their literature and vernacular Scriptures were destroyed with a vengeance. The Catholic priests who accompanied the armies made certain of this. So many copies of the Waldensian Scriptures were destroyed that we have little information about their Bibles. Only seven copies of the Romaunt New Testament have survived.

(3) In the 17th century, Samuel Morland visited the Waldenses in northern Italy as the representative of England’s ruler, Oliver Cromwell. Morland tried to assist the Waldenses in the bitter persecutions that were still being poured out upon them. Entire armies had been sent to destroy the Waldensian villages in the 17th century. Practically all of their documents had been destroyed. Morland gathered up any remaining materials he could find and in 1658 sent them back to England to be deposited in the library at the University of Cambridge. On a visit to the library in April 2005 I examined the F packet, which contains five small bound volumes of Waldensian doctrinal material plus a 14th-century Romaunt New Testament (though incomplete).

c. Consider some examples of how the Bible was persecuted by Rome:

### The English Bible was persecuted

(1) JOHN WYCLIFFE (1324-1384), the father of the English Bible, is an example of how Rome treated the Bible in these days.

- (a) Wycliffe, the vicar of St. Mary's Church at Lutterworth, completed (probably with assistants) the English New Testament in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382. He rejected many of Rome's heresies, including the doctrine that the people should not have the Bible in their own language. Here is one of the powerful statements that he made to the Catholic authorities: "You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins" (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, pp. 45-47).
- (b) Rome persecuted Wycliffe bitterly and attempted unsuccessfully to have him imprisoned. Pope Gregory XI issued five bulls against Wycliffe, but he was protected by the Queen of England and others.
- (c) Wycliffe died on December 31, 1384, and forty-three years later, in 1428, Roman Catholic authorities dug up Wycliffe's bones and burned them.
- (d) Rome also persecuted Wycliffe's followers, the Lollards, imprisoning them and putting many of them to death. The Lollards' Tower in London was so named because it is one of the places where they were imprisoned and tortured. It was illegal to own a copy of the Wycliffe Bible, and most of these priceless handwritten Scriptures were burned.

(2) WILLIAM TYNDALE (1484-1536), the first to translate the English Bible from Greek and Hebrew, is another example of Rome's persecutions.

- (a) As a young man Tyndale had a burden to translate the Bible into English directly from the Hebrew and Greek so that his people could have the Word of God from the purest fountains. When he expressed this plan to authorities in England, then under Roman Catholic rule, he learned that it would not be possible to do this work in his own country.

- (b) While employed at Little Sodbury Manor after graduation from Oxford, Tyndale preached in that part of western England and debated the truth with Catholic priests. One evening a priest exclaimed, "We are better without God's laws than the pope's." Hearing that, Tyndale replied: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."
- (c) Tyndale traveled to Europe to pursue this objective, where he had to move from place to place and hide his work from the ecclesiastical authorities.
- (d) After completing the New Testament and a portion of the Old, Tyndale was arrested in May 1535. He was imprisoned for 16 months in the castle at Vilvorde, Belgium.
- (e) On October 6, 1536, Tyndale was strangled and then burned at the stake. His ashes were thrown into the river that flowed alongside the castle.

#### The German Bible was persecuted

- (1) The pre-LUTHER GERMAN BIBLES were persecuted in the 15th century. The first complete printed Bible in German was published by Johann Mentelin (John Mentel) in 1466 (Olaf Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, 1934, p. 73). Mainz was the most active publication center in Germany at that time, and in 1485, the archbishop there issued AN EDICT PRESCRIBING CENSORSHIP FOR ALL TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE. The edict forbade the Scriptures to be given to simple and unlearned men and to women. Following is an excerpt: "We have observed books containing the office of the mass and also containing divine things and lofty matters of our religion and translated from Latin into the German language, not without damage to religion [meaning the Catholic religion!], circulating among the hands of the vulgar [common people] ... for who will give to the ignorant and unlettered persons, and to the female sex at that, into whose hands the manuscripts of sacred learning should fall, the ability to find the true sense? No sane person would deny that the texts of the Holy Gospels and of the Epistles of Paul require many additions and explanations from other writings."
- (2) THE LUTHER BIBLE, which first appeared in 1522, was also fiercely persecuted.
  - (a) D'Aubigne, in his *History of the Reformation*, describes how Rome replied to this milestone in Germany history: "Ignorant priests shuddered at the thought that every citizen, nay every peasant, would now be able to dispute with them on the precepts of our Lord. The King of England denounced the work to the Elector Frederick and to Duke George of Saxony. But as early as the month of November THE DUKE HAD ORDERED HIS SUBJECTS TO DEPOSIT EVERY COPY OF LUTHER'S NEW TESTAMENT IN THE HANDS OF THE MAGISTRATES. BAVARIA, BRANDENBURG, AUSTRIA, AND

ALL THE STATES DEVOTED TO ROME, PUBLISHED SIMILAR DECREES. IN SOME PLACES THEY MADE SACRILEGIOUS BONFIRES OF THESE SACRED BOOKS IN THE PUBLIC PLACES” (D’Aubigne, III, p. 77).

- (b) Persecutions were poured out by the Catholic authorities upon those who read the Luther Bible. An example was a bookseller named John in Buda, Hungary. He had circulated the German Scriptures throughout that country. “He was bound to a stake; his persecutors then piled his books around him, enclosing him as if in a tower, and then set fire to them. John manifested unshaken courage, exclaiming from the midst of the flames, that he was delighted to suffer in the cause of the Lord” (D’Aubigne, III, p. 152).
- (c) In 1520 a strict search for Lutheran Bibles and books was instigated in Venice, and those found were destroyed (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, p. 28).

(3) The ANABAPTIST LUTHERAN BIBLES were persecuted.

- (a) The German Bible produced by Anabaptists appeared in 1529, five years before the entire Luther Bible. It was called THE WORMS BIBLE, after the name of the city in which it was published. The translation was done by two Anabaptists, Ludwig Hetzer and Hans Denck, “accomplished scholars, thoroughly versed in Hebrew and Greek, as well as in Latin. Denck studied and received the degree of Master at the University of Basel, under and with Erasmus, Hetzer was an alumnus of Basel, and also of the University of Paris” (John Porter, *The World’s Debt to the Baptists*, 1914, p. 138). “At the time of its publication the approval of the Denck-Hetzer edition was unlimited and universal. Within three years thirteen separate editions appeared at Strasburg, Augsburg, Hagenau, and other places. ... In a word, in all Germany the book of the despised Anabaptists was bought, read, and treasured” (Ludwig Keller, *Hans Denck, Ein Apostel der Wiedertaufer*, p. 211; cited by Porter, p. 139).
- (b) This German Bible and its translators suffered the fate we have seen so many times already. “Denck, suffering with tuberculosis, under the decree of banishment and outlawry, died in hiding, in Basel, in 1529, a little before the Bible came from the press. Hetzer was arrested, condemned as a heretic, and beheaded the same year at Constance. ... EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT WAS MADE TO SUPPRESS THIS ‘HERETIC BIBLE;’ PRINTING OFFICES, PLACES WHERE THE BOOK WAS FOR SALE, PRIVATE HOUSES AND INDIVIDUALS WERE SEARCHED, AND ALL COPIES FOUND WERE DESTROYED. Only three copies that are accessible to scholars are now known to be in existence, one is in the library in the University of Bonn, one in a library in Stuttgart, and one in the New York Public Library” (Porter, p. 139).



### The Spanish Bible was persecuted

- (1) In the fifteenth century a Roman Catholic priest named BONIFACIO FERRER translated the whole Scriptures into the Valencian or Catalanian dialect of Spain. He died in 1417, but his translation was printed in Valencia in 1478. In spite of the fact that it was produced by a Catholic, “it had scarcely made its appearance when it was suppressed by the Inquisition, who ordered the whole impression to be devoured by the flames. So strictly was this order carried into execution, that scarcely a single copy appears to have escaped” (M’Crie, *History of the Progress and Suppression of the Reformation in Spain*, 1829, pp. 191, 92). In 1645 four leaves of this translation were discovered in a monastery.
- (2) In 1543 the FRANCISCO DE ENZINAS Spanish New Testament was published with the title “The New Testament, that is, the New Covenant of our Only Redeemer and Saviour Jesus Christ, translated from the Greek to the Castillian [Spanish] language.” Enzinas presented a copy of his New Testament to Charles V, Emperor of the Roman Empire (1519-1558), during the emperor’s visit to Brussels, who gave it to his Catholic confessor, Pedro de Soto. “After various delays, Enzinas, having waited on the confessor, was upbraided by him as an enemy to religion, who had tarnished the honor of his native country; and refusing to acknowledge a fault, was seized by the officers of justice and thrown into prison” (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, pp. 194-95). Francisco’s father and uncles visited him in prison and reproached him for dishonoring his family. After fifteen months’ confinement he miraculously escaped prison in Brussels and fled to Antwerp, then on to England, where, in 1548, he was given the chair of Greek at Cambridge. He returned to the continent in 1550 and died of the plague at Strasbourg in 1553. Most of his New Testaments were burned and all of his manuscripts were destroyed by the Inquisition.
- (3) What a contrast this was with the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church. As late as 1747, the inquisitor general in Spain fretted that “some men carried their audacity to the execrable extreme of asking permission to read the sacred scriptures in the vulgar tongue, not afraid of finding in them the most deadly poison” (M’Crie, p. 202, f3).
- (4) Pope Julius III addressed a bull to the inquisitors in 1550 in which he warned them of the Spanish Bibles which were being smuggled into the country (M’Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 203). The inquisitors were given instructions “to seize all the copies, and proceed with the utmost rigour against those who should retain them, without excepting members of universities, colleges or monasteries. ... At the same time the strictest precautions

were adopted to prevent the importation of such books by placing officers at all the sea-ports and land-passes, with authority to search every package, and the person of every traveller that should enter the kingdom” (M’Crie, p. 204).

### The French Bible was persecuted

- (1) JACQUES LEFEVRE (1455-1536), a professor at the University of Paris, published a French New Testament in 1523 and the complete French Bible in 1528. For his labor of love for the French people, the elderly Lefevre was persecuted by the Romanist authorities.
  - (a) One thing that galled them was Lefevre’s principle that all Christians should read the Scriptures. One of these angry authorities exclaimed: “Does he not dare to recommend all the faithful to read the Scriptures? Does he not tell therein that whoever loves not Christ’s Word is not a Christian; and that the Word of God is sufficient to lead to eternal life?” (D’Aubigne, III, p. 385).
  - (b) The Sorbonne, the theological faculty of the University of Paris, condemned Lefevre as a heretic and he was forced to flee to Strasbourg in 1525. In 1531, Lefevre took refuge in southern France and remained there till his death...” (Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, VI, p. 502).
  - (c) The Sorbonne declared war on printing and printers. In 1534, twenty men and one woman were burnt alive. One of those was a printer whose sole crime was printing some of Luther’s writings, while another was a bookseller who had sold the same.
  - (d) An edict was issued in 1546 by the Roman Catholic authorities against Lefevre and his work, in which the following statement is found: “It is neither expedient nor useful for the Christian public that any translation of the Bible should be permitted to be printed; but that they ought to be suppressed as injurious.” It was also ordered that any person possessing a copy of it should deliver it up within eight days (John Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, 1899, pp. 211, 12).
- (2) Many French believers were burned for distributing the Bible. Foxe’s unabridged Martyrology is a massive set of books. I own a copy of the 8th edition, which was printed in 1641. It is 3 volumes folio, 3227 pages, the three volumes together almost one foot in width, and each page 9 X 13.5 inches. Roughly 150 of these large pages are dedicated to an enumeration of just *some* of the French martyrs. Following are a few examples:
  - (a) In 1525 a Gospel preacher named Schuch was burned in the town of Nancy in France. When he was arrested and tried, he had his Bible with him, and holding the same as he stood before his accusers, he preached to them out of the Scriptures and “meekly yet forcibly confessed Christ crucified.” His

words so incised his tormentors that “transported with rage, they rushed upon him with violent cries, TORE AWAY THE BIBLE FROM WHICH HE WAS READING THIS MENACING LANGUAGE, and like mad dogs, unable to bite his doctrine, THEY BURNT IT in their convent.” The man was immediately condemned to be burned alive, and the sentence was quickly carried out. “On the 19th of August 1525 the whole city of Nancy was in motion. The bells were tolling for the death of a heretic. The mournful procession set out. When the martyr reached the place of execution, HIS BOOKS WERE BURNT BEFORE HIS FACE; he was then called upon to retract; but he refused, saying, ‘It is thou, O God, who hast called me, and thou wilt give me strength unto the end.’ Having mounted the pile, he continued to recite the psalm until the smoke and the flames stifled his voice” (D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, III, pp. 468, 69).

- (b) In 1546 Peter Chapot was burned to death for bringing French Bibles into France and for selling them. Because of his bold testimony at the place of persecution, a decree was made that “all which were to be burned, unless they recanted at the fire, should have their tongues cut off. Which law diligently afterward was observed” (Foxe, unabridged, 1641, II, p. 133).
- (c) Stephen Polliot was also arrested in 1546 with a bag of Scriptures and Gospel books he was distributing. His tongue was cut out and he was burned, “his satchel of books hanging about his neck” (Foxe, unabridged, II, p. 134).
- (d) Nicholas Nayle, a shoemaker, was arrested in Paris and burned in 1553 for bringing parcels of books to distribute among the believers.
- (e) In 1554 Dionysius Vayre, who had smuggled many books into France, was arrested in Normandy and sentenced to be “burned alive, and thrice lifted up, and let down again into the fire” (Foxe, unabridged, II, p. 145).
- (f) Waldensian bookseller Bartholomew Hector was arrested in 1556. When the Inquisition judge said, “You have been caught in the act of selling books that contain heresy; what say you?” Hector replied, “If the Bible is heresy to you, it is truth to me.” After languishing in prison for several months, Hector was burned at the stake.

#### The Dutch Bible was persecuted

- (1) In 1270 JACOB VAN MAERLANDT completed the four Gospels in Dutch. “This effort aroused the wrath of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Utrecht, who thought it was disrespectful to the Scriptures thus to bring them within the reach of the common people, and Van Maerlandt nearly lost his life as a reward for his labor” (John Beardslee, *The Bible among the Nations*, p. 175).
- (2) In 1526 the first entire Bible in Dutch was published by JACOB VAN LIESVELDT in Antwerp, and 20 years later Liesveldt was beheaded in Antwerp “for his printing labours” (*A History of the Geneva Bible*, I, p. 35).

## The Italian Bible was persecuted

ANTONIO BRUCIOLI published an Italian New Testament at Venice in 1530 and an entire Bible two years later. Brucioli also produced a commentary on the whole Bible, which was published in seven volumes. “His translations of the Bible were put into the first class of forbidden books, and all his works, on whatever subject, ‘published or to be published,’ together with all books which came from his press, even after his death, were strictly prohibited. ... violent measures were afterwards employed for its suppression” (M’Crie, *Reformation in Italy*, 1856, pp. 56, 57).

2. During the Dark Ages the Traditional Greek Text was preserved among the Bible believing churches. Even the modern textual critics admit that the Traditional Text of the Reformation was the text in common use throughout this period. Consider two testimonies:

Bruce Metzger states: “...during the period from about the sixth or seventh century down to the invention of printing with moveable type (A.D. 1450-56), THE BYZANTINE FORM OF TEXT WAS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE AUTHORITATIVE FORM OF TEXT AND WAS THE ONE MOST WIDELY CIRCULATED AND ACCEPTED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, p. xx). Actually Metzger’s own research demonstrates that the Traditional Text was dominant from the 4th century forward. Metzger sees nothing in this except an accident of history, but the Bible believer sees the providential hand of God.

Eldon Epp observes: “The TR and its precursor, the Byzantine ecclesiastical text, had maintained a position of dominance for as long as a millennium and a half when the mortal wound was inflicted by Westcott and Hort” (Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 100). A millennium and a half prior to 1881 takes us back to 381 A.D. Thus Epp admits that the Traditional Text was dominant from the 4th century onward.

It is the obvious dominance of the Traditional Text that caused Westcott and Hort to create the theory of a 4th century Lucian Recension. According to this theory, the Traditional Text was created in the 4th century through an official revision that conflated together the various Greek texts. This newly produced Greek text was then promoted by official sanction so that it came to dominate over the Alexandrian or Egyptian text. All of this is a figment of Hort’s imagination, but he was forced to adopt this position because of the obvious dominance of the Traditional Text.

The following is a summary of the evidence that the Traditional Text underlying the Reformation Bibles is the Preserved Word of God. There are three witnesses: Greek manuscripts, quotations from Church Fathers, and ancient versions. (For a more extensive study

of this evidence see *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, “Is it true that most of the manuscript evidence supports the Traditional Text of the Reformation?” This book is available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org. See also Jack Moorman’s *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 856-854-4452.)

- a. The vast majority of extant Greek New Testament manuscripts support the Traditional Text.** A large percentage (roughly 98%) of the extant Greek manuscripts, numbering roughly 5,400, represent the Traditional type of text found in the Reformation Bibles.

(1) The testimony of *the Greek uncials* (also called *majuscules*)

- (a) These are ancient New Testaments or portions thereof written in all caps with no space between words and little or no punctuation. There are about 263 uncials extant, dating from the 2nd to the 11th centuries. Many of the earliest are fragments.
- (b) Most of the uncials represent the Traditional text, as admitted by the textual critics. “A great number of uncials (especially those of the later centuries) actually preserve little more than a purely or predominantly Byzantine Majority text” (Aland, *The Text of the N.T.*, 2nd edition, p. 103). Kurt Aland uses the expression “little more,” because he despises the Traditional Text, but he admits that the testimony of the uncials is largely in favor of this Text.

(2) The testimony of *the Greek minuscules*

- (a) The minuscules were written in lower case with some punctuation and spaces between the words and thus are much easier to read and interpret than the uncials. There are roughly 2,937 minuscule Greek manuscripts extant.
- (b) The minuscules replaced the uncial style from the 9th century forward. This was an important step in the transmission of the Scriptures, and faith in divine preservation implores us to see the hand of God in this critical transition. The exemplars that were the basis for the creation of the minuscules have disappeared, but we know that they existed and that they contained the same type of text we find in the minuscules. “In the codicology the great value of the transliteration process in the 9th century and thereafter is recognized. At that time the most important New Testament manuscripts written in majuscule script were carefully transcribed into minuscule script. ... THE IMPORT OF THIS DATUM HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ENOUGH IN THE PRESENT NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. FOR IT IMPLIES THAT JUST AS THE OLDEST, BEST AND MOST CUSTOMARY MANUSCRIPTS COME TO US IN THE

NEW UNIFORM OF THE MINUSCULE SCRIPT, DOES IT NOT?" (Jacob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament*, pp. 26, 27).

- (c) "Does it not seem likely that scribes of the Ninth Century would be in a better position to decide on the 'oldest and best manuscripts' than textual critics of the Twentieth? Why during this changeover did they so decisively reject the text of Vaticanus and instead make copies of that text which now underlies the Authorized Version?" (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 26).

(3) The testimony of *the Greek lectionaries*

- (a) The lectionaries are collections of New Testament readings used in church services. (The word *lection* is from a Latin root meaning "to read.")
- (b) There are about 2,280 Greek lectionaries extant (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 163).
- (c) They are "a Byzantine type of text" (Aland, p. 169), meaning they represent the Traditional Text found in the Reformation Bibles.

(4) The testimony of *the Greek Byzantine Empire*

- (a) The Traditional Text is called the *Byzantine Text* because it represents the Greek Text that was preserved in the Greek Byzantine Empire. The capital city of the empire was called Byzantium until it was conquered in 330 A.D. by Constantine and renamed "Constantinople" or "New Rome." The Byzantine Empire was the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which survived (within ever narrowing boundaries) for a thousand years after the western half had crumbled into various feudal kingdoms. In the late fourth century Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the sole religion of the Empire and Constantinople became the religious center of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, while Rome remained the center in the west. In 1054 the Roman Catholic Church split from the Eastern section. The Byzantine Empire lasted from roughly 452 to 1453 A.D., at which time Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks.
- (b) The Byzantine Empire received the Greek New Testament from the area most saturated with apostolic churches and most zealous for the sound faith. In 565 A.D. the Byzantine Empire covered all of the sections of Asia Minor and Europe where the early apostolic churches had been founded, including the cities of Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Thyatira, Athens, the province of Galatia, and Rome.
- (c) While the Greek language died out as a living language in the Roman Empire, it remained so in the Byzantine Empire. Having received the Greek text from the part of the world most saturated with apostolic churches, it preserved that text for more than 1,000 years.



**Byzantine Empire 565 A.D.**

- (d) This lasted until the fall of Constantinople to the Muslims in 1453. At that time the Greek Orthodox Christians were disbursed to the west and carried with them the precious Greek manuscripts and their knowledge of the Greek language.
- (e) In God's providence, this was exactly the same hour in history in which movable type was invented in Europe. A mere three years after the fall of Constantinople the Gutenberg Bible (in Latin) was printed and books began to be multiplied in Europe. During the last half of the 15th century, Bibles were printed not only in Latin but also in German, Italian, French, Dutch, Swedish, and other languages. The Greek New Testament was printed in 1516. "...until the middle of the fifteenth century, Constantinople still stood, sorely pressed indeed by the Moslems, but yet independent; a Christian Greek kingdom, retaining the ecclesiastical literature, the language ... Then came the final overthrow and dispersion of 1453. The Greek scholars and ecclesiastics, who then filled Europe with the news of their calamity, became the channels for transmitting to all the west the precious remains of early Christianity; and providence prepared the church with the new art of printing to preserve and diffuse them. It was thus that the Constantinopolitan MSS., the representatives of the common text of former ages, became the parents of

our received text” (Robert L. Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871, reprinted in *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, 1890, pp. 350-389). If one cannot see the providential hand of God in these events in regard to the preservation of the Scriptures, I do not understand how it could ever be seen.

- (f) The Byzantine Greek New Testament was largely the basis for the Received Text printed in the early 1500s. The exceptions were the recovery of a few words such as those of Acts 8:37 and 1 John 5:7 that were better preserved in the Latin tradition.

## **b. The Ancient Versions support the Traditional Text.**

“Versional History is by far the most important and stirring in ‘church’ history. It is an account that often winds along the trail of blood, and should be told more fully. Just as the roots of the Authorized Version go back to a Tyndale or Wycliffe, so it is with God’s humble people with a heart for the Bible to whom we will look rather than the lofty church ‘fathers’” (Moorman, *A Closer Look*, 1990, p. 28; for a study of the versional evidence, we recommend Moorman’s book, which is available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ, 856-854-4452).

### **Following is a summary of some of the important ancient versions:**

#### **Old Latin (Italic)**

- (1) Old Latin is so called because it predated the Jerome Latin Vulgate adopted by the Roman Catholic Church. It was likely first translated from Greek in roughly 157 A.D. (Scrivener and Miller, *A Plain Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, II, 1894, pp. 42, 43).
- (2) We know only a little about the Old Latin. There are no entire Old Latin New Testaments in existence, only about 60 fragments, dating from the 4th to the 13th centuries (the books of Jude and 2nd and 3rd John are missing entirely). In addition there are quotations of Old Latin from ancient church leaders.
- (3) There is a significant difference between the Old Latin in the West and the Old Latin in Africa. The Old Latin in Africa contains a bewildering variety of readings including blatantly corrupt ones. The Old Latin in Italy and Europe, on the other hand, was closer to the Received Text than the old Latin in Africa (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 72).
- (4) From what we do know, the western Old Latin was close to the Traditional Text. See Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, pp. 28-30.



- (5) The Old Latin continued to be used by Christians separated from Rome, particularly the Waldenses and Albigenses, until the 13th century. “When Jerome’s revision took hold of the church, the Old Latin representatives for the most part dropped out of notice. Some of them, however, held their ground and continued to be copied down to the 12th and even the 13th century. Codex C (Ephraemi) is an example of this; it is a manuscript of the 12th century, but as Professor Burkitt has pointed out (*Texts and Studies*, IV, ‘Old Latin,’ 11) ‘it came from Languedoc, the country of the Albigenses. Only among heretics isolated from the rest of Western Christianity could an Old Latin text have been written at so late a period’” (“Latin Version, The Old,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). Note that the term “heretic” here simply means one that was so regarded by the Roman Catholic Church.

### Syriac Peshitta

- (1) This translation is from Syria, which was the home of the famous missionary church at Antioch (Acts 13).
- (2) It is very ancient, perhaps going back to the time of the apostles. “Bishop Ellicott in 1870 wrote, ‘It is no stretch of imagination to suppose that portions of the Peshitta might have been in the hands of St. John’” (quoted from Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*, p. 30). The Syrian Orthodox churches still use the Peshitta, even in some parts of southern India, and according to their tradition, the Peshitta was actually translated by Mark or Jude.
- (3) There are about 350 ancient manuscripts of the Syriac Peshitta and they represent the Traditional Text.
- (4) The history and date of the Peshitta has been revised by modern textual critics. “The Peshitta Syriac version, which is the historic Bible of the whole Syrian Church, agrees closely with the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. Until about one hundred years ago it was almost universally believed that the Peshitta originated in the 2nd century and hence was one of the oldest New Testament versions. Hence because of its agreement with the Traditional Text the Peshitta was regarded as one of the most important witnesses to the antiquity of the Traditional Text. In more recent times, however, naturalistic critics have tried to nullify this testimony of the Peshitta by denying that it is an ancient version. Burkitt (1904), for example, insisted that the Peshitta did not exist before the 5th century but ‘was prepared by Rabbula, bishop of Edessa (the capital of Syria) from 411-435 A.D., and published by his authority’” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 173, 174).

- (6) The refutation of this theory is summarized from Jack Moorman as follows. (See also Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 135-147.)
- (a) There is not a trace of such a thing in Syrian ecclesiastical history. As Arthur Voobus, an authority in this field, writes, ‘... this kind of reconstruction of textual history is pure fiction without a shred of evidence to support it’ (*Early Versions of the New Testament*, Estonian Theological Society, 1954, see pp. 90-97).
  - (b) Further, this position is contrary to established facts. In Rabbula’s day a massive split occurred in the Syrian Church. The opposing sides were known as the Nestorians and Monophysites (led by Rabbula). Yet, both sides regarded the Peshitta as their authoritative Bible. It is impossible to believe that the side bitterly opposed to Rabbula should at the same time embrace unanimously his alleged revision of the Scriptures. Further, such a unanimous acceptance by both parties in the early 400’s argues powerfully for the Peshitta’s early origin.

### Latin Vulgate

- (1) The Latin Vulgate was based on the work of Jerome (340-420), who was called upon by Damasus, the Bishop of Rome (who was already exalting himself far above his fellows and calling himself the Pope), to produce a standard Latin Bible. This was completed between A.D. 383 and 405.
- (2) The Vulgate had a wide influence throughout the Dark Ages. The Catholic Church used it, but so did many non-Catholic believers. It was the basis for many versions in other languages during the Dark Ages, such as the first English Bible translated by John Wycliffe in 1384.
- (3) The Vulgate is a part way text, much more akin to the Traditional Text than to the Alexandrian, but containing some corruptions, such as the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.
- (4) At the same time the Latin Vulgate contained certain features that were consistent across the centuries. For one, it contained Acts 8:37 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, whereas the Greek Byzantine manuscripts commonly omitted these. *Thus God preserved these verses largely in the Latin.* And this was true not only for Rome’s Latin Vulgate, but also for the Latin and other versions used by the Waldenses, Albigenses, Lollards, Anabaptists, and other separatist Christians. At the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, when the pure text was recovered from its venture through the Dark Ages, the Reformation editors understood that the Greek Byzantine text needed to be modified by the Latin in a few places.

### Georgian

- (1) The Georgians, of a mountainous district between the Black and Caspian seas, were evangelized from Armenia in the early fourth century, and Kurt and Barbara Aland theorize that the first Georgian translation, called Old Georgian, was made from the Armenian (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 205).
- (2) The extant Georgian manuscripts represent the Traditional Text. For example, 1 Timothy 3:16 reads “God was manifest in the flesh.”

### Gothic

We have already seen (under the section on the 4th to the 10th centuries) that the Gothic Bible was a missionary Bible and that it represents the Majority or Traditional Text. “‘The type of text represented in it,’ Kenyon (1912) tells us, ‘is for the most part that which is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts’” (Hills, pp. 174, 175).

### Slavonic

We have already looked at the Slavonic Bible under the section on the 4th to the 10th centuries. It was a missionary Bible that represented the Traditional Text.

### Romaunt or Occitan

The Romaunt or Occitan New Testaments were used by the Waldenses and date back to the 12th century. Romaunt was the language of the troubadours and men of letters in the Dark Ages. It was the predecessor of French and Italian. The Romaunt Bibles were small and plain, designed for missionary work. “This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it” (J. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, chapter 7, “The Waldenses”). I have had the privilege of walking in the valleys in northern Italy where the Waldenses were based and of examining the beautiful little copy of the Romaunt New Testament located at the Cambridge University Library, one of only seven surviving copies. The Romaunt New Testaments represented the Traditional Text and contained the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.

### German

The Tepl is an old German translation used by the Waldenses from the 14th through the 15 centuries. Comba, who wrote a history of the Waldenses, said the Tepl was a

Waldensian version (Comba, *Waldenses of Italy*, pp. 190-192). Comba sites two authorities, Ludwig Keller and Hermann Haupt, for this information. Comba also states that the Tepl was based on old Latin manuscripts rather than the Jerome vulgate. The Tepl's size identifies it with the small Bibles carried by the Waldensian evangelists on their dangerous journeys across Europe. It represents the Traditional Text rather than the Alexandrian.

### English

The first English New Testament was completed by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers in 1380 and used extensively by the persecuted Lollards throughout the 15th century. It represents the Traditional Text rather than the Alexandrian.

These ancient Bibles used by persecuted saints in the process of fulfilling the Great Commission were the predecessors of the Reformation Bibles that went to the ends of the earth from the 16th to the 19th centuries and textually they were very similar, with only minor differences. They did not represent the Alexandrian text preferred by modern textual critics (which explains why they have been largely ignored by textual scholars in the last 150 years).

## **c. The evidence from quotations of ancient “Church Fathers” to the Traditional Text**

The third realm of testimony to the original text of the New Testament is found in quotations from the writings of early church leaders.

### Introductory Thoughts about the “Church Fathers”

- (1) The term “church fathers” is a misnomer that was derived from the Catholic Church’s false doctrine of hierarchical church polity. These men, who lived in the centuries following the apostles, were not “fathers” of the churches in any scriptural sense and did not have any true authority beyond their individual assemblies; they were merely church leaders from various places who have left a record of their faith in writing. The Roman Catholic Church exalted men to authority beyond the bounds designated by Scripture, making them “bishops” and “fathers” over churches located within entire regions, and this unscriptural terminology (“church fathers”) has been adopted even by Protestants and not a few Baptists.
- (2) The writings of “church fathers” are grouped into four divisions: *Apostolic Fathers* (second century), *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (second and third centuries), *Nicene Fathers* (fourth century), and *Post-Nicene Fathers* (fifth century). Nicene refers to the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 that dealt with the problem of

Arianism and affirmed the doctrine of Christ's deity. Thus, the Ante-Nicene Fathers are so named because they lived in the century before this council, and the Post-Nicene, because they lived in the century following the council. The "Apostolic Fathers" are grossly misnamed, because none of them were actually apostles.

- (3) Much more could be said about the "church fathers," but we are getting off the subject. (For more information see the *Advanced Bible Studies* course on Church History, available from Way of Life Literature.) Regardless of the theological problems associated with ancient church leaders, the fact remains that the quotations they give from the Scripture is an important testimony to the original text, and taken as a whole the quotations from these ancient writings favor the Traditional Text of the Reformation Bibles.

### The Testimony of the Scripture Quotations of the "Church Fathers"

- (1) The testimony of John Burgon.

- (a) Burgon's textual research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never equaled. His unpublished work on the quotations from ancient "fathers," which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing references to 86,489 quotations. Burgon's research established that the Traditional Reformation Text was the prominent text of the early centuries.
- (b) Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations are from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: "Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon's death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!" (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

- (2) Specific examples of quotations that support the Traditional Text:

Ignatius (d. 107 AD), a pastor at the great missionary church in Antioch, was martyred for his faith by being fed to wild beasts in Rome. The Scripture quotations from his surviving writings represent the Traditional Text. For example, he referred to "God existing in flesh" (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 7:1) and "God manifest in human form" (Ignatius to the Ephesians, 19:1).

This is an obvious allusion to the important testimony of 1 Timothy 3:16 (“God was manifest in the flesh”) as it stands in the Reformation texts and versions.

Polycarp (70 to 155 AD), the pastor of Smyrna. Polycarp was martyred for his faith by being burned at the stake.

- (a) He refers to the important theological test in 1 John 4:3 as follows: “For every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist...” (Polycarp to the Philippians, 7:1). The modern critical text removes the words “Christ is come in the flesh” and reads, “and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus.” Thus Polycarp confirms the test as we have it in the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible as opposed to the almost meaningless test of the modern versions (even a Jehovah’s Witness or a Mormon will “confess Jesus”).
- (b) Another example is Polycarp’s support for the TR reading of “the judgment seat of Christ” from Romans 14:10 as opposed to the modern versions reading of “judgment seat of God” (Polycarp’s epistle to the Philippians, 6:2).

### 3. John Burgon’s testimony about the text that was preserved during the Dark Ages

After devoting much of his life to investigating the history of the Bible with the objective of determining what biblical text has come down through the centuries, John Burgon concluded:

“Call this text Erasmian or Complutensian,--the text of Stephens, or of Beza, or of the Elzevirs,--call it the ‘Received,’ or the *Traditional Greek Text*, or whatever name you please;--the fact remains, that a text *has* come down to us which is attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, ancient Versions” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 269).

This testimony cannot be taken lightly. Burgon was a truly eminent textual scholar. Called “that grand old scholar” by Frederick Scrivener, Burgon was a brilliant man, fluent in many languages, and he traveled throughout Europe and parts of the Middle East collating ancient manuscripts; he personally examined the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. He did probably the most extensive personal textual research into the quotations of “church fathers” that has ever been accomplished.

John Burgon was not only a great scholar; he believed in the absolute infallibility of biblical inspiration.

In my estimation, no man has come up to Burgon’s standard in these two realms since his day. I am not in a position to reproduce Burgon’s textual researches. I don’t have

the skills that Burgon had. I have done my best to test the conclusions of the textual scholars using every resource at hand, but at the end of the day I must lean somewhat upon their research. I accept Burgon's conclusion that the Traditional Text has come down to us attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, ancient Versions. When the strange theories of modern textual criticism are rejected, it is evident that the Traditional Reformation text has far more historic authority than the modern critical text. Amen and amen and amen!

## **THE REFORMATION -- THE PRINTING OF THE BIBLE**

The fourth great period that we need to examine in understanding the preservation of the New Testament is the Reformation, when handwritten manuscript era ended and the Bible was put into print.

1. God's promise of Preservation tells us that the Bible came out of the Dark Ages intact (Psalm 100:5; Mat. 24:35; 28:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:25). Faith in divine providence is the only way we can possibly have confidence in the Bible after it endured so many centuries of continual, vicious assault. The preservation of the Scriptures is a greater miracle than the formation of the glorious starry universe, but the God who can do one can easily do the other. Any man who believes in the God of Genesis 1:1 can believe in the God of Matthew 5:18.

"The God who brought the New Testament text safely through the ancient and medieval manuscript period did not fumble when it came time to transfer this text to the modern printed page. This is the conviction which guides the believing Bible student as he considers the relationship of the printed *Textus Receptus* to the Traditional New Testament text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. ... It is inconceivable that the divine providence which had preserved the New Testament text during the long ages of the manuscript period should blunder when at last this text was committed to the printing press" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 199, 200).

2. The Greek New Testament was first printed in 1516 and went through several editions.

a. This Greek New Testament has many different names:

(1) It is called the *RECEIVED TEXT* [*Textus Receptus* in Latin], because it was the text commonly passed down through the centuries in Greek, Latin, and in various ancient translations, such as the Syriac, Slavonic, Georgian, and Gothic.

(2) It is called the *MAJORITY TEXT*, because it represents the vast majority of the more than 5,400 existing manuscripts. Roughly 98% of the Greek manuscripts are of this type. (Note that the term *Majority Text* has taken a slightly different meaning today, since the publication of a Greek text by that name in 1982 by Thomas Nelson. The Hodges-Farstad *Majority Text* is a little different from the

Received Text. It omits 1 John 5:7, for example, because it is based on the principle that only the witness of the Greek manuscripts should be used to ascertain the reading, while the important witness of ancient writings, ancient lectionaries, and ancient versions are ignored. See *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part IX, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because We Reject the ‘Majority Text’ Position.”)

- (3) It is called the *TRADITIONAL TEXT* (John Burgon’s term), because it represents the text traditionally used in the churches.
  - (4) It is called the *COMMON TEXT* or *KAPPA TEXT*, because it represents the text commonly found in the Greek New Testament manuscripts. This was the name used by Hermann von Soden in his researches. Von Soden, who made the most extensive study of the Byzantine Text that has ever yet been undertaken (Hills, p. 181), concluded: “The substance of the text remains intact throughout the whole period of perhaps 1,200 years. Only very sporadically do readings found in other text-types appear in one or another of the varieties.”
  - (5) It is called the *BYZANTINE TEXT*, because it was preserved in the Greek Byzantine Empire. The capital city of the empire was called Byzantium until it was conquered in 330 A.D. by Constantine and renamed Constantinople. The Byzantine period lasted from about 452 to 1453 A.D. (at which time Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks). In reality, the Traditional Text is not strictly Byzantine, as that was only one area in which it was maintained. We have Traditional type Greek manuscripts from the western part of the old Roman Empire as well as from the east.
  - (6) It is called the *CONSTANTINOPOLIAN TEXT* (Griesbach’s term), because Constantinople was the capital of the Greek or Byzantine Empire.
  - (7) It is called the *ANTIOCHIAN TEXT* or the *SYRIAN TEXT* (Hort’s term), because it was that form of text preserved in Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria, which, of course, is where the great missionary church was located (Acts 13:1-4).
  - (8) It is called the *ORIENTAL TEXT* (Semler’s term) or the *ASIATIC TEXT* (Bengel’s term), because it came from the Eastern part of the old Roman Empire.
  - (9) It is also called the *KOINE TEXT*, because it was written in a more common style of Greek in contrast to the classical.
- b. The Greek Received Text was first published by DESIDERIUS ERASMUS (1466-1536).



- (1) Erasmus published five editions of the Greek New Testament (1516, 1519, 1522, 1527, 1535).
- (2) Erasmus' 3rd edition Greek New Testament included the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, and this statement has been in the Received Greek New Testament ever since. The house where Erasmus stayed near Brussels to complete the work on the 3rd edition houses the Erasmus Museum today. When we visited there in 2003 the deputy curator told us that Erasmus used Greek manuscripts from the library that was located in the house in those days, which was owned at that time by the Saints Peter and Guido Catholic Church a block or so away. She said that they do not know what manuscripts he used but it is certain that the library possessed some.
- (3) Erasmus was born at Rotterdam and had the best education then available. He visited England three times (in 1499, in 1505, and again in 1509-1514, when he taught at Cambridge University).
- (4) He was probably the greatest scholar then living. "By his travels he was brought into contact with all the intellectual currents of his time and stimulated to almost superhuman efforts. He became the most famous scholar and author of his day and one of the most prolific writers of all time, his collected works filling ten large volumes in the Leclerc edition of 1705 (phototyped by Olms in 1962). As an editor also his productivity was tremendous. Ten columns of the catalogue of the library in the British Museum are taken up with the bare enumeration of the works translated, edited, or annotated by Erasmus, and their subsequent reprints. ... To conclude, there was no man in all Europe better prepared than Erasmus for the work of editing the first printed Greek New Testament text, and this is why, we may well believe, God chose him and directed him providentially in the accomplishment of this task" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 196).
- (5) Erasmus was a humanist, but this must not be defined after the modern fashion. In a letter dated Jan. 7, 1985, Andrew Brown, Editorial Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, replied as follows to this issue: "The use of the word 'humanist' in the Renaissance and Reformation period does not in any way share the atheistic connotations which that word now has in popular usage. A 'humanist' in that period was simply someone who was interested in classical literature, culture and education, as a means of attaining a higher standard of civilised life. Stephanus, Calvin and Beza were all humanists in this sense..." (Letter to David Cloud from Andrew Brown, Jan. 7, 1985). On a visit with two friends to the Erasmus Museum near Brussels in 2003, we asked the deputy curator whether Erasmus was a humanist and she confirmed Andrew Brown's statement. She told us that he was not a humanist after the modern

definition but after the Reformation definition, meaning that he was a lover of learning and personal liberty and that he refused to depend strictly upon the “church’s” authority but wanted to go back to original sources such as the Greek for the New Testament.

(6) Erasmus was much more doctrinally sound than the typical Catholic of his day.

- (a) Erasmus’ *Enchiridion (Christian Soldier’s Manual)* was so sound that William Tyndale translated it into English.
- (b) Following is a quote from Erasmus’ “Treatise on the Preparation for Death”:  
“We are assured of victory over death, victory over the flesh, victory over the world and Satan. Christ promises us remission of sins, fruits in this life a hundredfold, and thereafter life eternal. AND FOR WHAT REASON? FOR THE SAKE OF OUR MERIT? NO INDEED, BUT THROUGH THE GRACE OF FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS. We are the more secure because he is first our doctor. He first overcame the lapse of Adam, nailed our sins to the cross, sealed our redemption with his blood ... He added the seal of the Spirit lest we should waver in our confidence ... What could we little worms do of ourselves? CHRIST IS OUR JUSTIFICATION. CHRIST IS OUR VICTORY. CHRIST IS OUR HOPE AND SECURITY. ... I BELIEVE THERE ARE MANY NOT ABSOLVED BY THE PRIEST, NOT HAVING TAKEN THE EUCHARIST, NOT HAVING BEEN ANOINTED, NOT HAVING RECEIVED CHRISTIAN BURIAL WHO REST IN PEACE, WHILE MANY WHO HAVE HAD ALL THE RITES OF THE CHURCH AND HAVE BEEN BURIED NEXT TO THE ALTAR HAVE GONE TO HELL.”
- (c) Hugh Pope, a Romanist, said Erasmus expressed doubts on “about almost every article of Catholic teaching” (see Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 329). Pope listed six dogmas in particular that Erasmus questioned, including the mass, confession, the primacy of the Pope, and priestly celibacy.
- (d) Jan Schlecta of the Bohemian Brethren corresponded with Erasmus about their views and listed five non-Catholic doctrines that the Brethren believed. Erasmus had no objection to any of them (P.S. Allen, *The Age of Erasmus*, “The Bohemian Brethren”; cited from Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 328).
- (e) Erasmus advocated believer’s baptism by immersion. In his paraphrase on Matthew 28, Erasmus wrote: “After you have taught them these things, and they believe what you have taught them, have repented their previous lives, and are ready to embrace the doctrine of the gospel, then immerse them in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, so that by this holy sign they may believe that they have been delivered freely through the benefit of my death from the filthiness of all their sins and now belong to the

number of God's children" (Abraham Friesen, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*, pp. 50, 51). Friesen observes that "in virtually every passage in the Acts of the Apostles that deals with baptism, Erasmus proceeded to set the sermon or event into the context of the Great Commission" (p. 51). In his annotations on Mark 16:15-16, Erasmus said, "The apostles are commanded that they teach first and baptize later. The Jew was brought to a knowledge [of God] through ceremonies; the Christian is taught first" (Friesen, p. 54). This is a clear statement in support of scriptural baptism as opposed to infant baptism.

- (f) In the introductory notes to the third edition of his Greek New Testament, Erasmus advocated re-baptism for those who were already sprinkled as infants (Friesen, pp. 34, 35). "It is little wonder, therefore, that when the doctors of the Sorbonne took a look at Erasmus's proposal in 1526, they censured it and wrote that to 'rebaptize' children would be to open 'the door to the destruction of the Christian religion'" (Friesen, p. 35).
- (7) Erasmus wrote boldly against many of Rome's errors. Consider some excerpts from his writings:
  - (a) Matthew 23:27 (on whited sepulchres)--'What would Jerome say could he see the Virgin's milk exhibited for money ... the miraculous oil; the portions of the true cross, enough if they were collected to freight a large ship? Here we have the hood of St. Francis, there Our Lady's petticoat, or St. Anne's comb, or St. Thomas of Canterbury's shoes ... and all through the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows, and approve and dwell on them in their rescripts.'
  - (b) Matthew 24:23 (on Lo, here is Christ or there)--'I saw with my own eyes Pope Julius II, at Bologna, and afterwards at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession as if he were Pompey or Cæsar. St. Peter subdued the world with faith, not with arms or soldiers or military engines.'
  - (c) 1 Timothy 3:2 (on the husband of one wife)--'Other qualifications are laid down by St. Paul as required for a bishop's office, a long list of them. But not one at present is held essential, except this one of abstinence from marriage. ***Homicide, parricide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege, these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are chaste.*** The great proportion fall into lust and incest, and open profligacy. It would surely be better if those who cannot contain should be allowed lawful wives of their own, and so escape this foul and miserable pollution.'

- (8) Though Erasmus was not a reformer after the fashion of a Luther or a Zwingli or a Tyndale, and though it does not appear that he was very spiritually courageous, he desired the Scriptures to be placed in the hands of every man. As we have seen, this sentiment alone set him apart dramatically from that which prevailed among Catholic authorities of that day, and it was a sentiment that was severely condemned by Catholic authorities.
- (a) Erasmus said: "I vehemently dissent from those who would not have private persons read the Holy Scriptures nor have them translated into the vulgar tongues, as though either Christ taught such difficult doctrines that they can only be understood by a few theologians, or the safety of the Christian religion lay in ignorance of it" (Erasmus, quoted by Preserved Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History*, 1923, p. 184).
- (b) In the Latin preface to his New Testament, Erasmus said: "Christ wishes his mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish all women to read the gospel and the epistles of St. Paul, and I wish that they were translated into all languages of all Christian people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and the Irish, but even by the Turks and the Saracens. I wish that the husbandman might sing parts of them at his plow, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way."
- (9) Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, Switzerland, *among his Protestant friends*, "without relations of any sort, so far as known, with the Roman Catholic Church" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 195). There is a famous painting of Erasmus sitting with his Protestant friends, the original of which is in the Erasmus Museum in Brussels. I saw it on our visit there in April 2003.
- (10) Erasmus' work was rejected by the Catholic Church. His books were burned throughout Europe. Erasmus' works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books by Pope Paul IV in 1559, and Erasmus himself was branded as a heretic by the Council of Trent which met from 1545 to 1564.
- (11) It was a Catholic apologist who made the famous statement, "Erasmus planted, Luther watered, but the devil gave the increase" (Smith, *Erasmus*, p. 399). Thus, the Roman Catholic Church did not recognize Erasmus as a friend but as an enemy. David Daniell rightly observes: "From Desiderius Erasmus came a printed Greek New Testament which, swiftly translated into most European vernaculars, was a chief cause of the Continent-wide flood that should properly be called the Reformation" (*The Bible in English*, p. 113).

- (12) Erasmus' first edition was finished hastily and contained errors but these were corrected in subsequent editions. "God works providentially through sinful and fallible human beings, and therefore His providential guidance has its human as well as its divine side. And these human elements were evident in the first edition (1516) of the Textus Receptus. For one thing, the work was performed so hastily that the text was disfigured with a great number of typographical errors. These misprints, however, were soon eliminated by Erasmus himself in his later editions and by other early editors and hence are not a factor which need to be taken into account in any estimate of the abiding value of the Textus Receptus" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 202). The fact that defenders of modern textual criticism invariably bring up the irrelevant issue of the errors in Erasmus' first edition demonstrates either that they are blindly following another man's arguments or that their goal is to hide the truth.
- (13) In 1533, Sepulveda furnished Erasmus with 365 alternative readings from the Vaticanus manuscript, such as the omission of "is preferred before me" in John 1:27 and "who is in heaven" in John 3:13, but Erasmus rejected them.
- (14) Contrary to popular belief, Erasmus' manuscript authority was sufficient, and he consciously rejected the Vaticanus type manuscripts. "With respect to manuscripts, it is indisputable that he [Erasmus] was acquainted with every variety which is known to us; having distributed them into two principal classes, one of which corresponds with the Complutensian edition, the other with the Vatican manuscript. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one and rejected the other. The former was in the possession of the Greek church, the latter in that of the Latin; judging from the internal evidence he had as good reason to conclude the Eastern church had not corrupted their received text as he had grounds to suspect the Rhodians from whom the Western church derived their manuscripts, had accommodated them to the Latin Vulgate. One short insinuation which he has thrown out, sufficiently proves that his objections to these manuscripts lay more deep; and they do immortal credit to his sagacity. In the age in which the Vulgate was formed, the church, he was aware, was infested with Origenists and Arians; an affinity between any manuscript and that version, consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted" (Frederic Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 413-15). Thus Erasmus exercised a clear principle for discarding the Vaticanus type manuscripts and for accepting the Traditional.
- (15) Sadly, Erasmus was one of those men we often find at crucial stages in church history; he was an "In Betweenite," a "Mr. Facing Both Ways." He wrote sharply against many Catholic errors and respected the Reformers and even the Anabaptists in many areas but he refused to join himself plainly with them and take a clear stand. His Catholic enemies complained that he laid the egg that

Luther hatched, but he added a complaint of his own that the bird was not one to his liking!

- (16) Erasmus should be viewed through the eyes of faith in the God of the Bible. “Although he was not himself outstanding as a man of faith ... he was providentially influenced and guided by the faith of others. ... God works providentially through sinful and fallible human beings, and therefore His providential guidance has its human as well as its divine side. ... It is customary for naturalistic critics to make the most of human imperfections in the Textus Receptus and to sneer at it as a mean and almost sordid thing. ... But those who concentrate in this way on the human factors involved in the production of the Textus Receptus are utterly unmindful of the providence of God” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, pp. 199, 202, 203).
- (17) For a discussion of Erasmus and 1 John 5:7, see “The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database,” which is available from Way of Life Literature.

c. The Greek Received Text was revised by men who separated from Rome.

- (1) ROBERT STEPHANUS (also known as Estienne) (1503-1559) published four editions of the Greek Received Text (in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551). He was responsible for the modern verse divisions of the Bible. He was the first to incorporate italics into his Bibles, indicating words that are not in the original languages. His son testified that he printed the Bible because of his “burning with the love of God.”
- (2) THEODORE BEZA (1519-1605) published ten editions of the Greek Received Text, four of which were independent folio editions and the others were smaller reprints of these. The folio editions appeared in 1565, 1582, 1588-9, 1598. He became the head of the Protestant community in Geneva upon the death of John Calvin in 1564. Beza traveled to many cities to represent the persecuted Waldenses of Italy. In his writings Beza viewed the Roman Catholic Church as apostate and the Waldenses as faithful Christians who had maintained the New Testament faith through the Dark Ages.
- (3) A family of Dutch printers named ELZEVIR published two editions of the Greek Received Text, the first in 1624 and the second in 1633. In the preface to the second edition the phrase *TEXTUS RECEPTUS* (RECEIVED TEXT) made its first appearance -- “You have therefore the text now received by all [*textum ab omnibus receptum*] in which we give nothing changed or corrupt.” This was not merely an advertising blurb but a statement of faith that was shared by all Protestants and Baptists of that day.

- (4) Dr. Edward Hills observes: “This statement has often been assailed as a mere printer’s boast or ‘blurb,’ and no doubt it was partly that. But in the providence of God it was also a true statement. For by this time the common faith in the current New Testament text had triumphed over the humanistic tendencies which had been present not only in Erasmus but also in Luther, Calvin, and Beza. The doubts and reservations expressed in their notes and comments had been laid aside and only their God-guided texts had been retained. The Textus Receptus really was the text received by all” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 208).
- (5) Kurt and Barbara Aland, prominent textual critics who reject the Received Text, admit that it was formerly accepted as the inspired apostolic Scripture by Protestants in general. Note the following two statements: “Every theologian of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (and not just the exegetical scholars) worked from an edition of the Greek text of the New Testament WHICH WAS REGARDED AS THE ‘REVEALED TEXT.’ THIS IDEA OF VERBAL INSPIRATION (i.e., of the literal and inerrant inspiration of the text), which the orthodoxy of both Protestant traditions maintained so vigorously, WAS APPLIED TO THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS...” (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd edition, 1987, pp. 6,7). “It is UNDISPUTED that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [that the] Received Text [was that inspired text] ... they regarded it as the ‘original text.’ ... IT WAS REGARDED AS PRESERVING EVEN TO THE LAST DETAIL THE INSPIRED AND INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD HIMSELF” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, 1987).
- (6) The Received Text was still regarded as the preserved apostolic Scripture by Protestants and Baptists in general until well into the 20th century and it continues to be regarded as such by a hundreds of thousands of biblical fundamentalists to this very day. We have documented this in *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the Authorized Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.
- d. In England, Stephanus’ 3rd edition was generally preferred, whereas in Europe, Elzevir’s 2nd edition was preferred.
- e. There is only a very slight difference between any of these various editions. According to the comparison done by Reuss in 1872, Beza’s 3rd edition of 1582 only departs from Stephanus’ 4th edition of 1551 only 38 times in the entire New Testament (Hills, p. 206). And according to Frederick Scrivener’s research, the King James translators departed from Beza’s 5th edition only 190 times. In contrast, of

three of the chief Alexandrian manuscripts, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and Codex D, Vaticanus disagrees with Vaticanus 652 times and with Codex D 1,944 times *in Mark alone*. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus disagree with one another in more than 3,000 places in the four Gospels alone! Jack Moorman makes this important observation about the Received Text: “These ... differences for the entire New Testament, many of which are very small, are a striking demonstration of the narrow limits of variation within the Received Text tradition. There is, in fact, just enough variation to show the independence of witnesses. Their work reflects a refining process in the providential preservation of the Word of God” (Moorman, *8000 Differences between the Textus Receptus and the Nestle-Aland NT Greek Texts*, 2002, p. vii).

Following are some of the most important of the differences between editions of the Received Text:

Luke 2:22 -- Erasmus and Stephanus have “their purification,” while Beza, Elzevir, and Complutensian have “her purification”

Luke 17:36 -- Erasmus and the first three editions of Stephanus omit this verse, while Beza, Elzevir, and the 4th edition of Stephanus include it.

John 1:28 -- Erasmus, Beza, Elzevir, and the 3rd and 4th editions of Stephanus have “Bethabara,” while the 1st and 2nd editions of Stephanus have “Bethany.”

John 16:33 -- Beza and Elzevir read “shall have tribulation,” while Erasmus and Stephanus read “have tribulation.”

Romans 8:11 -- Beza and Elzevir read “by His Spirit that dwelleth in you,” while Erasmus and Stephanus read “because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Romans 12:11 -- Beza, Elzevir, and the first edition of Erasmus read “serving the Lord,” while Stephanus and the 2nd to the 5th editions of Erasmus read “serving the time.”

1 Timothy 1:4 -- Erasmus, Beza, and Elzevir have “godly edifying,” while Stephanus has “dispensation of God.”

Hebrews 9:1 -- Stephanus reads “first tabernacle,” while Erasmus and Beza omit “tabernacle.”

James 2:18 -- The last three editions of Beza has “without thy works,” while Erasmus, Stephanus, and the first edition of Beza have “by thy works.”

- f. The editors of the Greek Received text were familiar with the Vaticanus manuscript in Rome and other manuscripts that contain Alexandrian readings preferred by the modern textual critics and *they rejected them*.

- (1) In 1533, Juan Ginez de Sepulveda furnished Erasmus with a lengthy list of 365 readings from the Vaticanus, but these were rejected not only by Erasmus but also by Stephenus, Beza, Luther, Reina and Valera (Spanish translators), Olivetan (French), Whittingham (Geneva), Tyndale, and by all of the 50 translators on the KJV committee. In his notes Erasmus dealt with such textual



problems as the conclusion of the Lord's prayer (Mat. 6:13), the ending of Mark (Mk. 16:9-20), the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53 - 8:11), and the omission of "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16. (Sepulveda was a rabid Romanist who wrote the book "Vindication of the Cruelties of the Spaniards against the Indians," which was published in Rome.)

(2) Beza owned at least two Alexandrian- or Western-type manuscripts, D (Codex *Bezae*) (which he gave to the University of Cambridge in 1581), and D2 (Codex *Claromontanus*), but he refused to follow the Alexandrian or "Western" readings.

(3) Stephanus printed variant readings from Codex D or a similar manuscript in the margin of his 3rd edition, but he refused to place these readings in the text.

3. The Greek Received text and the Hebrew Masoretic text were translated into the major languages of the world between the 16th and 19th centuries.

- a. The Received Text was translated into the major European languages: German (1521), English (1524), French (1528), Spanish (1569), Slovenian (1584), French Geneva (1588), Welsh (1588), Hungarian (1590), Dutch (1637), Italian (1641), Finnish (1642), Irish (1685), Romanian (1688), Latvian (1689), Lithuanian (1735), Estonian (1739), Georgian (1743), Portuguese (1751), Gaelic (1801), Serbo-Croatian (1804), Yiddish (1821), Albanian (1827), Slovak (1832), Norwegian (1834), Basque of Spain (1857), Russian (1865), Bulgarian (1864)
- b. The Received Text was translated into Native American languages in America: Pequot (1663), Mohawk (1787), Eskimo (1810), Delaware (1818), Seneca (1829), Cherokee (1829), Ojibway (1833), Dakota (1839), Ottawa (1841), Shawnee (1842), Pottawotomi (1844), Abenaki (1844), Nez Perce (1845), Choctaw (1848), Yupik (1848), Micmac (1853), Plains Cree (1861), Muskogee (1886)
- c. The Received Text was translated into the major languages of India: Malay (1734), Persian (1800), Bengali (1809), Oriya (1815), Marathi (1821), Kashmiri (1821), Nepali (1821), Sanskrit (1822), Gujarati (1823), Punjabi (1826), Bihari (1826), Kannada (1831), Assamese (1833), Hindi (1835), Urdu (1843), Telugu (1854), and 35 other languages
- d. The Received Text was translated into many other languages around the world: Syriac (1645), Armenian (1666), Bullom of Sierra Leone (1816), Saraiki of Pakistan (1819), Faroe of the Faroe Islands (1823), Turkish (1827), Sranan of Suriname (1829), Javanese of Indonesia (1829), Aymara of Bolivia (1829), Malay of Indonesia (1835), Manchu of China (1835), Malagasy of Madagascar (1835), Burmese of Burma (1835), Mandinka of Gambia (1837), Hawaiian (1838),

Mongolian (1840), Karaite of the Crimea Mountains (1842), Azerbaijani of the U.S.S.R. (1842), Subu of Cameroon (1843), Mon of Burma (1843), Maltese (1847), Garifuna of Belize-Nicaragua (1847), Ossete of Russia (1848), Bube of Equatorial Guinea (1849), Arawak of Guyana (1850), Maori of the Cook Islands (1851), Tontemboan of Indonesia (1852), Somoan (1855), Sesotho of Africa (1855), Setswana of South Africa (1857), Hausa of Nigeria (1857), Nama of Africa (1866), Maori of New Zealand (1858), Dayak of Indonesia (1858), Isixhosa of South Africa (1859), Karan of Burma (1860), Nubian of Egypt (1860), Igbo of Nigeria (1860), Efik and Yoruba of Nigeria (1862), Tibetan (1862), Ga of Ghana (1866), Tongan of Africa (1862), Twi of Ghana (1863), Isizulu of Africa (1865), Niuean of Tonga (1866), Dehu of New Caledonia (1868), Benga of Africa (1871), Ewe of Africa (1877), Batak of Indonesia (1878), Thai (1883). (Some of the previous information on Bible versions is derived from *Scriptures of the World*, United Bible Societies, 1988 and *The Bible in America*, 1936.)

e. We would emphasize that this list of translations is only partial.

- (1) By the end of the nineteenth century, the Bible or portions thereof had been produced in almost 900 languages (P. Marion Simms, *The Bible in America*, p. 177).
- (2) The American Sunday-School Union reported that the circulation of the Scriptures during the 19th century alone exceeded 520 million copies (Edwin Rice, *Our Sixty-six Sacred Books*, p. 191).
- (3) During its first hundred years (1804 to 1904), the British and Foreign Bible Society alone printed more than 200 million Bibles, Testaments, and portions of Scripture (*Lion's History of Christianity*, p. 558).
- (4) From 1816 to 1903, the American Bible Society distributed 72,670,783 volumes and portions of Scripture, while the Canstein Bible Institute issued more than 7,000,000 copies (Edwin Rice, *Our Sixty-six Sacred Books*, p. 192).
- (5) To this figure must be added the Scriptures printed by other Bible Societies (Scotland, Germany, Canada, etc.); by missionary organizations and societies (such as the Religious Tract Society, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; the American Sunday-School Union, and the American Tract Society); by denominational and other large publishing firms in Great Britain, America, and Europe; by mission presses in other lands; by independent groups, churches, and individuals. The Trinitarian Bible Society, for example, has published TR-based translations since 1831.

f. Though we cannot give the exact particulars of the textual basis for all of these

translations, we do know that the vast majority of these were Received Text Scriptures. I know this from correspondence with Bible Society leaders and missionaries, as well as from my own study of various sources, including personal examination of several of the translations referred to above (Slovak, Czech, Carey Nepali, Judson Burmese, German Luther, Russian, and Spanish). Some were translated from the English Authorized Version; some, from the Greek Received Text; others, from important European Received Text versions such as the Spanish and the German.

- g. When we say these were Received Text Bibles, we do not mean that they were exactly like the English King James Bible in every detail; we mean that they were textually the same as the KJV. They included the words and verses disputed by the modern texts. They contained “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16, for example. They contained Matthew 17:21 and Mark 9:44, 46 and Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53--8:11 and Acts 8:37--and the hundreds of other verses and portions of verses that are omitted or questioned in the new Bibles.
- h. It is important to understand, too, that in many cases the early Received Text versions in these languages have fallen into disuse since the twentieth century and have been replaced with Westcott-Hort type versions. This has been an objective of the national Bible Societies for many decades.

4. God’s people had confidence in the preserved Scriptures throughout this period, in the 1500s, 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s:

- a. The testimony of the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”
- b. The testimony of Francis Turretin, professor of theology at Geneva and prominent Reformed Protestant leader, 1674: “Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their entire preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words, especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract, in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted; especially when he could easily foresee and prevent such corruptions in order to establish the faith of his

church?” (Francis Turretin, *Institute of Elenctic Theology*).

- c. The testimony of John Owen, English Puritan leader, c. 1670: “But yet we affirm, that the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption. ... As the Scripture of the Old and New Testament were immediately and entirely given out by God himself, his mind being in them represented unto us without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration to the least iota or syllable; so, by his good and merciful providential dispensation, in his love to his word and church, his whole word, as first given out by him, is preserved unto us entire in the original languages; where, shining in its own beauty and lustre (as also in all translations, so far as they faithfully represent the originals), it manifests and evidences unto the consciences of men, without other foreign help or assistance, its divine original and authority” (Works, XVI, pp. 301, 349, 350).
- d. The testimony of Canon I of the Formula Consensus Helvetica, 1675 (which upheld the absolute authority not only the Greek Received Text but even the vowel points in the Masoretic Hebrew Text): “God, the Supreme Judge, not only took care to have his word, which is the ‘power of God unto salvation to every one that believes’ (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles, BUT HAS ALSO WATCHED AND CHERISHED IT WITH PATERNAL CARE FROM THE TIME IT WAS WRITTEN UP TO THE PRESENT, SO THAT IT COULD NOT BE CORRUPTED BY CRAFT OF SATAN OR FRAUD OF MAN. Therefore the Church justly ascribes to it his singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world (2 Pet. 1:19), a ‘sure word of prophecy’ and ‘Holy Scriptures’ (2 Tim. 3:15), from which though heaven and earth pass away, ‘the smallest letter or the least stroke of a pen will not disappear by any means’ (Matt 5:18).”
- e. The testimony of the Protestant Confession of Faith, London, 1679: “And by the holy scriptures we understand, the canonical books of the old and new testament, as they are now translated into our English mother-tongue, of which there hath never been any doubt of their verity and authority, in the protestant churches of Christ to this day.” This was the testimony of Baptist churches in the 17th century and they applied it to the King James Bible.
- f. I would remind my readers that even the modern textual critics admit this: “It is undisputed that from the 16th to the 18th century orthodoxy’s doctrine of verbal inspiration assumed ... [that the] Received Text [was the inspired text]... they regarded it as the ‘original text.’ ... it was regarded as preserving even to the last detail the inspired and infallible word of God Himself” (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, 2nd edition, 1987). The only

mistake in Aland's statement is their limitation of the period of "faith" from the 16th to the 18th century, whereas it actually lasted until late in the 19th century.

5. Bible believers of that era were not trying to "recover" the pure Scriptures; they were busy preaching the Scriptures to the ends of the earth! Consider the testimony of John Burgon about the purity of the Received Text:

- a. Burgon spent 30 years tracing the history of the Bible through the ages. He made tours of European libraries, examining and collating N.T. manuscripts wherever he went. He conducted extensive correspondence with librarians and scholars in many parts of the world. He visited the Vatican Library in 1860 to examine the Vaticanus. In 1862, he visited Mt. Sinai to inspect manuscripts at St. Catherine's, where the Sinaiticus manuscript had been discovered.
- b. His index of N.T. citations by the Church Fathers consists of 86,489 quotations, more than 4,000 of which are from writers that died before the year 400 A.D. This massive 16-volume work, titled *Index of Texts of the New Testament Quoted by the Fathers*, is in the British Library.
- c. Burgon's research proves that the Traditional Text was in existence and was widely quoted in the first three centuries following the apostles. Thus, contrary to the myth that is often promoted by defenders of the modern versions, the Text underlying the King James Bible is demonstrated to be at least as ancient as the text that was produced by modern textual criticism.
- d. The following was Burgon's conclusion as to the preservation of the Reformation Text: "Call this text Erasmus or Complutensian,--the text of Stephens, or of Beza, or of the Elzevirs,--call it the 'Received,' or the *Traditional Greek Text*, or whatever name you please;--the fact remains, that a text *has* come down to us which is attested by a general consensus of ancient Copies, ancient Fathers, ancient Versions" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 269).

**Conclusion and Summary of this section: *We hold to the King James Bible because it is based on the preserved Greek New Testament***

1. We have a choice today between the Alexandrian Greek text that came from Egypt or the Traditional Greek text that came from Antioch. The textual issue really does come down to "A Tale of Two Cities."

2. We have traced the New Testament text through four important periods in church history:

- a. Period 1: The First Century, which was the time of the completion of the New Testament

- (1) During the lifetime of the apostles, the New Testament was written under divine inspiration, completed, and sealed.
- (2) The New Testament Scriptures were also recognized and received by God's people through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that inspired the Scripture enlightened the believers to recognize and receive it.
- (3) The New Testament Scriptures were carefully preserved by the believers and transmitted to the next generations.
- (4) The New Testament Scriptures were multiplied and distributed throughout the world.
- (5) Though the Word of God was viciously attacked, God's people defended it and kept it pure.

b. Period 2: The Post Apostolic Era, which was a time of corruption and confusion

- (1) The New Testament faith and the New Testament manuscripts were viciously and widely assaulted by false teachers.
- (2) There was a heretical school of theology at Alexandria, Egypt, and associated with this school were Origen and Eusebius who had a role in the creation of the Alexandrian Text that is preferred by modern textual critics.
- (3) The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts come from Egypt and bear clear evidence of theological corruption, especially pertaining to the Deity of Jesus Christ, a doctrine that was under attack in that time and place.

c. Period 3: The Dark Ages, which was a time when the Bible was persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church

- (1) The Catholic Church made laws against translating and reading the Bible in the common languages.
- (2) These laws were promoted by the Popes until the end of the 19th century.
- (3) Christians who held to the apostolic faith were persecuted and their literature and Scriptures were destroyed.
- (4) Bible translators were persecuted.
- (5) The Traditional Greek text of the Reformation is the text that was used most widely by God's churches through the centuries. It is supported by the majority

of Greek manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the writings of ancient church leaders.

d. Period 4: The Reformation, which was the time of the printing of the Bible

Because of God's promise of preservation, we can be sure that He was guiding in this important hour of church history and that the Greek text that was printed and then translated into the major languages of the world was the apostolic text.

3. The Bible that came to us out of the Dark Ages is the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received Text and those versions that have been translated from them, such as the King James in English and the Luther in German. The doctrine of preservation tells us that this is the pure Word of God. Consider the testimony of John Burgon, who looked into this issue as diligently as any man who has lived in the last 200 years:

"I am utterly disinclined to believe, so grossly improbable does it seem--that at the end of 1800 years 995 copies out of every thousand, suppose, will prove untrustworthy, and that the one, two, three, four, or five which remain, whose contents were till yesterday as good as unknown, will be found to have retained the secret of what the Holy Spirit originally inspired. I AM UTTERLY UNABLE TO BELIEVE, IN SHORT, THAT GOD'S PROMISE HAS SO ENTIRELY FAILED, that at the end of 1800 years, much of the text of the Gospel had in point of fact to be picked by a German critic out of a waste-paper basket in the convent of St. Catherine; and that the entire text had to be remodelled after the pattern set by a couple of copies which had remained in neglect during fifteen centuries, and had probably owed their survival to that neglect; whilst hundreds of others had been thumbed to pieces, and had bequeathed their witness to copies made from them" (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established*, 1896, p. 12).

4. If the Reformation text is not the preserved Word of God, it will never be recovered.

- a. The original autographs are gone and there is no way for certain, apart from faith in divine preservation, to know what they said.
- b. Much of the evidence required to reconstruct the original text is missing from the first 1,200 years of the church age. The vast majority of manuscripts from that era are gone. Much of the material, in fact, from the next 300 years is also gone (such as that pertaining to the Waldenses, the Albigenses, the Anabaptists, and even the Lollards in England).

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE GREEK TEXT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES BIBLE**

1. What is the foundational fact that every student needs to know about Bible versions?
2. In what country did the Alexandrian Greek text underlying the modern versions arise?
3. What three things does Egypt symbolize in Scripture?
4. What verse says the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles and prophets into all truth?
5. What verse says the New Testament is given in words taught by the Holy Spirit?
6. In what verse does Peter put the writings of the apostles on the same level as those of the Old Testament prophets?
7. In what verse does Peter call the writings of Paul “scripture”?
8. In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul quotes from what Gospel, calling it scripture?
9. What verse says the New Testament faith was “once delivered” during the days of the apostles?
10. What verse says the church at Thessalonica received the teaching of Paul as the word of God?
11. In what year did Tertullian indicate that the authentic writings of the apostles were still extant?
12. What confession of faith in what year said the Scriptures were “kept pure in all ages”?
13. What verse teaches that the believer is to keep the things of God “without spot”?
14. Antioch was located in which of the following: Egypt, Italy, Europe, England, Asia Minor?
15. What is significant about Antioch in the New Testament?
16. Why is the Traditional Reformation text also called “Antiochian” or “Syrian”?
17. In what verse did Paul speak of many which were corrupting the Word of God?
18. In what verse did Paul say that some were forging epistles in the name of the apostles?
19. In what verse did Peter warn of those who were wresting the Scriptures?
20. What scholar said the worse corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subjected occurred within a hundred years of the apostles?
21. What scholar said that not a few of the codices of ancient Christendom must have exhibited a text which was scandalously corrupt?
22. In what year did Hippolytus or Gius say that heretics had laid hands fearlessly on the divine Scriptures?
23. In what century did Tertullian warn that the Marcionites were adding to and taking away from the Scriptures?
24. Eusebius warned that heretics were producing spurious books reputed to be written by which five of the apostles?
25. What was Gnosticism?
26. Where was the seedbed for Gnosticism located?
27. How influential was Gnosticism in Egypt?
28. Paul refutes Gnostic teachings in what four passages?
29. Marcion and his followers did what to the Scriptures: added to them? shortened them?
30. Why did Valentinus change “the only begotten son” to “the only begotten God”?
31. What was Docetism?



32. What was Adoptionism?
33. What was Sabellianism?
34. What was Arianism?
35. The Shepherd of Hermas describes the visions of “-----“?
36. What heresy did the Epistle of Barnabas teach pertaining to baptism?
37. What did Origen believe about the Holy Spirit?
38. What did Origen believe about Jesus?
39. What did Origen believe about the bodily resurrection?
40. Why is the Westcott-Hort principle that the oldest manuscripts are the best bogus?
41. Why should Bible manuscripts from Antioch be preferred over those from Alexandria, Egypt?
42. In what way do the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts attack the deity of Christ in John 1:27?
43. In what way do the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts attack the deity of Christ in John 3:13?
44. In what way do the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts attack the deity of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:47?
45. What was the first Pope to make a law against the translation of the Bible?
46. In what year was a law made in England against the translation of the Bible into English?
47. Who was the last Pope to issue a warning against vernacular translations?
48. How did Rome treat John Wycliffe and William Tyndale?
49. What is an uncial?
50. What is a minuscule?
51. In what century did the minuscules replace the uncials?
52. What is a lectionary?
53. When did the Byzantine Empire fall and the Greek manuscripts carried into Europe?
54. What important invention was made at this same time?
55. What is the association between Antioch and the Syriac Peshitta?
56. How have the modern textual critics revised the history of the Peshitta?
57. Where did the term “church fathers” come from?
58. According to the research of John Burgon, what percentage of the quotations from church fathers prior to 400 A.D. support the Traditional Reformation Text?
59. What is papyrus?
60. What is parchment?
61. In what century did paper begin to be used extensively for writing?
62. What is a codex?
63. What are three types of errors that are common when copying manuscripts?
64. After devoting much of his life to investigating the history of the Bible, what was John Burgon’s conclusion about the Received Text?
65. What are four other names for the Received Text?
66. Why is the Received Text also called the Byzantine Text?

67. What did the term “humanist” mean in Erasmus’ day?
68. What godly objective did Erasmus have that set him apart dramatically from most Catholic authorities of that day?
69. Fill in the blanks: “----- planted, ----- watered, but ----- gave the increase.”
70. Erasmus’ first Greek New Testament contained many errors. Were these ever corrected?
71. Did Erasmus know anything about the Vaticanus?
72. In what year did the term “Textus Receptus” make its appearance in a Greek New Testament?
73. What does Textus Receptus mean?
74. Was it merely an advertising blurb or did it genuinely express the faith of Christians of that day?
75. How many times does Beza’s 3rd edition Greek New Testament differ from Stephanus’ 4th edition?
76. What did men of God such as Francis Turretin and John Owen believe about preservation?

## **B. THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION AUTHENTICATES THE MASORETIC HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES AND OTHER REFORMATION BIBLES.**

### **Section Summary**

1. Introduction
2. The history of the Masoretic Text
3. The changes in the Old Testament in the 20th century
4. Did Jesus Christ and the apostles use a Greek translation or the Hebrew itself?
5. What about the seeming contradictions in the Hebrew Masoretic Text?
6. Conclusion

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. We have dealt with the Greek and the New Testament side of the KJV and the modern versions. What about the Old Testament? Is there an issue today on the Hebrew side and can we be sure that the Masoretic Hebrew text underlying the Reformation Bibles is the preserved Word of God?
2. The answer is yes, there is and yes we can be sure. The issue pertaining to the Hebrew text did not arise until the 20th century. It was not an issue in the 19th century as modern textual criticism was being developed and applied to the New Testament. Until the 20th century the traditional Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text was the one that was generally accepted and used for translations.
3. Beginning in the mid-20th century, modern English versions began to use an “eclectic” text for the Old Testament, borrowing readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Greek, Latin and Syriac translations, even from thin air! This was the case with the New American Standard Version (1960), the New International Version (1969), and even the New King James Version (1979).
4. For the following reasons we are convinced that we need to stay with the traditional Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament underlying the Reformation versions such as the King James Bible.

### **THE HISTORY OF THE HEBREW MASORETIC TEXT**

1. It was to the Jews that God assigned the task of preserving the Hebrew Old Testament (Rom. 3:1-2). In Romans 3 Paul calls the Hebrew Old Testament the very “oracles of God” (“oracles” means utterance), and tells us that these oracles were committed to the Jews.

- a. Even though the Jews did not always obey the Scripture, they held it in reverence and believed that each jot and tittle was the inspired Word of God. Josephus and Philo “assure us that they would have undergone all sorts of torments rather than have taken a letter from the Scripture, or altered a word of it” (John Kitto, *Illustrated History of the Bible*, edited by Alvan Bond, 1908, p. 39). A wealthy man in Amsterdam offered a large sum of money to any Jew who would pronounce the Hebrew covenant name of God *only once*, but no Jew would accept the offer. This reverence was placed in their hearts by the God of the Bible for the purpose of its preservation.
- b. In particular, it was the Jewish priests who were assigned as the keepers of the Scriptures (Deut. 31:24-26; 17:18).
- c. There were periods of spiritual backsliding in which the Word of God was almost unknown (2 Chron. 15:3), but God preserved His Word in spite of man’s failure. The Word of God was never permanently corrupted or lost (2 Kings 22:8). (In the New Testament era, too, there were periods in which the Scripture was almost unknown in most “churches,” covered over by Roman Catholic tradition and inquisition.)
- d. After the Babylonian captivity there was a revival within the Jewish priesthood (Ezra 7:10) and the Old Testament Scriptures were preserved. “By Ezra and his successors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all the Old Testament books were gathered together into one Old Testament canon, and their texts were purged of errors and preserved until the days of our Lord’s earthly ministry. By that time the Old Testament text was so firmly established that even the Jews’ rejection of Christ could not disturb it” (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, 4th edition, p. 93).
- e. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., it was Jewish scribes called *Tannaim* (Teachers) who guarded the Old Testament Scriptures. These scribes “copied the text of the Old Testament with great accuracy” (Hills, p. 93). The Tannaim were followed by the other scribes called *Amoraim* (Expositors). Though they did not believe the Old Testament Scripture and they exalted man-made tradition above the Scripture in daily practice, they highly revered the Scripture and preserved it from generation to generation. (It was during this time that the Talmud was produced.)
- f. Beginning in the sixth century, it was **THE MASORETES** (Traditionalists) who jealously guarded the Hebrew text and passed it down from generation to generation from the 6th to the 11th century A.D.

(1) The Masoretes were families of Hebrew scholars who had centers in Palestine,

Tiberius, and Babylon. The traditional Hebrew Masoretic text gets its name from these scholars. One of the most famous was Ben Asher at Tiberius, who “labored to produce a correct copy of the Scriptures.” From the 12th century forward the Ben Asher text was the received Hebrew text.

- (2) The Masoretes exercised great care in transcribing the Old Testament. Only an orthodox Jew was allowed to copy a manuscript. They developed stringent rules for copying in order to keep the text pure. The following rules are from *General Biblical Introduction* by Herbert Miller (1937), with information added from other sources.
  - (a) The parchment must be made from the skin of clean animals; must be prepared by a Jew only, and the skins must be fastened together by strings taken from clean animals.
  - (b) Each column must have no less than 48 nor more than 60 lines. The entire copy must be first lined.
  - (c) The ink must be of no other color than black, and it must be prepared according to a special recipe.
  - (d) No word or letter could be written from memory; the scribe must have an authentic copy before him, and he must read and pronounce aloud each word before writing it.
  - (e) He must reverently wipe his pen each time before writing the word for “God” (*Elohim*) and he must wash his whole body before writing the name “Jehovah” lest the Holy Name be contaminated.
  - (f) Strict rules were given concerning forms of the letters, spaces between letters, words, and sections, the use of the pen, the color of the parchment, etc.
  - (g) The revision of a roll must be made within 30 days after the work was finished; otherwise it was worthless. *One mistake on a sheet condemned the sheet.*
  - (h) Every word and every letter was counted, and if a letter were omitted, an extra letter inserted, or if one letter touched another, the manuscript was condemned and destroyed at once. For example, according to the Masoretic rules, the book of Genesis in Hebrew contains 1,534 verses (the middle one is Gen. 27:40), 27,713 words, and 78,100 letters. A Masoretic Hebrew manuscript of Genesis contains 4,395 lines in 43 columns. (The verse division in the English Bible is different and by this division Genesis contains 1,508 verses.)
  - (i) Miller concludes with this observation: “Some of these rules may appear extreme and absurd, yet they show how sacred the Holy Word of the Old Testament was to its custodians, the Jews (Rom. 3:2), and they give us strong encouragement to believe that WE HAVE THE REAL OLD TESTAMENT, THE SAME ONE WHICH OUR LORD HAD AND WHICH WAS

ORIGINALLY GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD” (*General Biblical Introduction*, 1937, p. 185).

- (3) It is commonly taught in contemporary books on the history of the Bible that the Masoretes added THE VOWEL POINTS TO THE HEBREW TEXT and that prior to them the text contained only consonants. According to this view, the vowel points are not therefore inspired or authoritative and textual critics are at liberty to modify them.
- (a) If this view is true, prior to the adding of the vowel points the word “water” would have appeared merely as “wtr.” It is obvious that this would be a strange way to preserve any writing, as words without consonants are not words at all, because “wtr” could be “water,” “waiter,” “weather,” “winter,” and any number of other words. The same is true for Hebrew.
  - (b) The debate regarding the Hebrew vowel points raged in the 17th century, with defenders on both sides. The view that the vowel points were invented by Jews in Tiberius hundreds of years after the death of Christ was first proposed in 1623 by LOUIS CAPPEL (or Cappellus) (1585-1658), in the book *Arcanum Punctionis Revelatum*. Cappel, a French Protestant, was a textual critic after the fashion of the modern ones, believing that many errors had crept into the biblical text. His *Critica Sacra* was a collection of these alleged errors. Cappel’s work was generally rejected in the 17th century, so much so that he was unable to print the *Critica Sacra* in Protestant lands. It was not until 1650, when his son, Jean, *WHO HAD CONVERTED TO ROMAN CATHOLICISM*, was able to print the book *IN CATHOLIC PARIS*.
  - (c) JOHANN BUXTORF (1564-1629), Hebrew professor at Basle, in Switzerland, assailed Cappel’s view, contending that the vowel points were as ancient as the Hebrew language. Buxtorf was the first Protestant rabbinical scholar and he and his sons and a nephew were eminent in Hebrew scholarship for more than a century (Johann Buxtorf, Jr. -- 1599-1664, Johann Jakob Buxtorf -- 1645-1704, Johann Buxtorf, 3d nephew of Johann Jakob -- 1663-1732). Johann Buxtorf, Jr., followed his father as Hebrew professor at Basle and carried on his father’s battle against the Cappel position. Between 1648-51 he published an extensive defense of the antiquity of the Hebrew vowel points entitled *A Treatise on the Origin, Antiquity, and Authority of the Vowel Points and Accents in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament, against Lewis Cappellus’ Mystery of the Points Unveiled* (Basle, 1648).
  - (d) BRIAN WALTON (1660-61) in England carried on the fight for Cappel’s position on the vowel points, and he published the *London Polyglot* (1654-57) with a revision of the Hebrew vowel points and an appendix containing various readings of the Greek New Testament.

- (e) Walton was opposed in England by the staunch, Christ-centered and kind-hearted Congregationalist JOHN OWEN, one-time vice-chancellor of Oxford University, who understood that the issue touched on the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture. (For Owen's position see "Digression on the Origin of the Hebrew Vowel-Points," in *Biblical Theology: The History of Theology from Adam to Christ*. This was translated from Latin by Stephen Westcott and originally published in 1661. It was reprinted in 1994 by Soli Deo Gloria press, Morgan, Pennsylvania.)
- (f) In 1675 the HELVETIC CONSENSUS FORMULA, which was adopted throughout Switzerland, affirmed the doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of Scripture and put forth its faith in the inspiration of the vowel points in the traditional Hebrew text.
- (g) The inspiration of the vowel points was defended by many men in the 17 to the 19th centuries, including JAMES USSHER, JOHN RAINOLDS, JOHN GILL, and J. LIGHTFOOT. PETER WHITFIELD defended the vowel points in *A Dissertation on the Hebrew Vowel-Points, Shewing that they are an Original and Essential Part of the Language* (Liverpool: Peter Whitfield, 1748, 288 p.). A copy of this rare book is in the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University. Dr. Thomas Strouse reviewed this book in "A Review of and Observations about Peter Whitfield's *A Dissertation on the Hebrew Vowel-Points*," available online at <http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/CriticalTexts/witfields.htm>. Whitfield observed that the Roman Catholic Church favored the modernistic position on the vowel points because it allows its priests to be the final authority in Bible interpretation.
- (h) For an overview of this debate see RICHARD MILLER, "The Debate over the Vowel Points and the Crisis in Orthodox Hermeneutics," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1980. See also "The Vowel-Points Controversy in the XVI and XVII Centuries" by Bernhard Pick (1892). This is available in a reprint from Classic Reprints, P.O. Box 11781, Pensacola, FL 32524, 800-363-9604.
- (i) In the early 20th century, GEORGE SAYLES BISHOP, pastor of the Reformed Church of Orange, New Jersey, defended the inspiration of the vowel points in "The Inspiration of the Hebrew Letters and Vowel-Points," which was one of the chapters in *The Doctrines of Grace and Kindred Themes* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, 1910). This chapter was reprinted in the *Plains Baptist Challenger*, July 1991. Bishop said: "The constant, uniform tradition of the Jews, affirming that the points came down from Moses, and the giving of the Law, was a tradition unbroken down to the year 1538, twenty-one years after Luther had nailed up his Theses" (*Doctrines of Grace*, p. 44).
- (j) Since Bishop's day, modern textual scholars have sided almost exclusively with the position that the vowel pointing in the Masoretic Hebrew text is not

inspired. As with many positions held by modern textual critics, their stand on the Hebrew vowel points has not been proven or established upon unquestionable historical authority and it remains a mere theory that is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture. Modern textual critics tend to come down on the side of any theory that weakens the authority of the Bible or the deity of Jesus Christ.

- (k) DR. THOMAS STROUSE of Emmanuel Baptist Seminary in Newington, Connecticut, is a contemporary defender of the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points. He observes, “[The view] that assumes that the inspired Hebrew text contained only the consonants and that the vowels (and consequently the pronunciations) were passed on through oral tradition is unbiblical and wrongheaded. ... This view maintains an insufficient position on the perfect preservation of the Hebrew text. The Bible is replete with divine promises of the preservation of the Lord’s Words (e.g., Psa. 12:6-7, 119:111, 152, 160; Mt. 4:4, 5:18, 24:35, etc.). Consonants are not words. Words include consonants and vowels. The Bible declares that ‘every word of God is pure’ (Prov. 30:5-6) and these pure Words are complete Words with consonants and vowels” (Strouse, *Scholarly Myths Perpetuated on Rejecting the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament*, Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary, Newington, CT, 2004).
- (l) I believe that Dr. Strouse is correct in his observation, and we would observe that the doctrine of divine preservation requires that we see the hand of God in the full Masoretic Hebrew text, including its vowel points. This is the Hebrew text that has been handed down to us by the Jews.
- (m) The vowel points added by the Masoretes were obviously *not* invented by them, for this would fly in the face of divine inspiration. What they did was standardize the vowels that had been transmitted by the Hebrews through the centuries. The history of this transmission has not been preserved; in fact, very little of the history of the transmission of the Hebrew text has come down to us; but we stand on this by faith in divine inspiration and preservation.
- (n) Note the following statement from the Formula Consensus Helvetica of 1675: “The Hebrew original of the Old Testament which we have received and to this day do retain as handed down by the Hebrew Church, ‘who had been given the oracles of God’ (Rom. 3:2), is, not only in its consonants, but in its vowels -- EITHER THE VOWEL POINTS THEMSELVES, OR AT LEAST THE POWER OF THE POINTS -- not only in its matter, but in its words, inspired by God. It thus forms, together with the Original of the New Testament, the sole and complete rule of our faith and practice; and to its standard, as to a Lydian stone, all extant versions, eastern or western, ought to be applied, and wherever they differ, be conformed. Therefore, we are not able to approve of the opinion of those who believe that the text which the Hebrew Original exhibits was determined by man’s will alone, and do not



hesitate at all to remodel a Hebrew reading which they consider unsuitable, and amend it from the versions of the LXX and other Greek versions, the Samaritan Pentateuch, by the Chaldaic Targums, or even from other sources.”

g. The Hebrew language was carefully maintained throughout the Dark Ages by Jewish grammarians.

(1) The Talmud had a role in this. The *Talmud*, a commentary on Jewish traditions, was produced both in *Jerusalem* and *Babylonian* editions. Though the Talmud contained Pharisaical heresies and even pure nonsense, *the fact that it was in Hebrew helped keep the Hebrew language alive through the Dark Ages*, when the Jews were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. “As a spiritual guide the Talmud has had a deadening and blinding effect; as a national guide it has had a binding effect on Jewish thought and action and has helped to preserve the Hebrew language” (William Hull, *The Fall and Rise of Israel*, 1955, p. 44).

(2) In the 12th century David Kimchi published an influential Hebrew grammar and dictionary that was used by Jews and Christians throughout Europe. Some of Kimchi’s works were translated into Latin.

2. The Masoretic text was the first printed Hebrew text.

a. Several editions were printed between 1488 and 1525.

(1) The entire Hebrew Bible was first printed in 1488, just 28 years before the first Greek New Testament was printed. A second and third edition was printed in 1491 and 1494.

(2) The Daniel Bomberg edition of the Masoretic text was printed in 1516-17 and was called the *First Rabbinic Bible*. Bomberg was a Jewish rabbinical scholar.

(3) The Ben Chayyim (or Chajim or Hayyim) edition of the Bomberg Hebrew Bible was printed in 1524-25. The editor was Abraham Ben Chayyim iben Adonijah, a Jewish rabbinical scholar. This was called the *Second Great Rabbinic Bible*.

b. These Masoretic Hebrew Bibles became the basis for all of the Reformation translations. For 400 years this Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament was the sole basis for Bible translation work around the world.

c. In the late 18th century Kennicott and De Rossi published collations of 1,459 Hebrew manuscripts and detected “no substantial variation” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 100).

- d. The Ben Chayyim Masoretic text was used by Rudolf Kittel for the first two editions of the *Biblia Hebraica* in 1906 and 1912.

## THE CHANGES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

1. A different Hebrew text was substituted for the Ben Chayyim and vast changes were suggested from other sources.

- a. Different editions of the Hebrew Old Testament (from D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, pp. 27-28) --

- (1) In 1937 the third edition of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* followed the Leningrad Codex (B19a or "L"), dated 1008 A.D. This is based on the modern textual criticism's theory that "oldest is best." The Leningrad Codex is of the Ben Asher family but it is a different from the manuscripts used prior to the 20th century.

- (a) Rudolf Kittel was a theological modernist. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971) Rudolph Kittel (like his son) was an anti-Semite and a believer in Hellenistic mystery religions. Dr. Henry Morris, founder of the Institute for Creation Research, warned that Rudolph Kittel "was a German rationalist higher critic, rejecting Biblical inerrancy and firmly devoted to evolutionism" (Morris, *A Creationist's Defense of the King James Bible*, El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1996).

- (b) Rudolf's son Gerhard Kittel, editor of the influential multi-volume *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, was a Nazi as well as a modernist. He received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig, where Constantine von Tischendorf was trained. He taught there and at two other schools before moving in 1926 to the University of Tübingen, which had long been a hotbed of theological modernism. Those who worked with him on the theological dictionary were also Nazis and had been Kittel's students at the University of Tübingen. Gerhard Kittel supported Hitler's hatred of the Jews and was tried and convicted at Nuremberg as a Nazi war criminal.

- (2) The Stuttgart edition of Kittel's Hebrew text (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) was printed in 1967 and 1977. It was based on the Leningrad Codex and included even more suggested changes in the footnotes.

- (3) In 1983 a new edition of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* was published, which contained an update in the critical apparatus with even more changes suggested to the Hebrew Masoretic text.

- b. The footnotes in the Kittel Hebrew texts suggest 20,000 to 30,000 changes based on the following sources:

- (1) The Septuagint, which is a Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX). This is found in several manuscripts, chiefly the Aquila, the Symmachus, and the Theodotion. Dr. Donald Waite observes, “Now that Greek Old Testament is a very deficient translation. In many books and places, it is just like the Living Version. It is a paraphrase, a perversion.”
- (2) The Syriac translation of the Old Testament
- (3) The Latin Vulgate translation of the Old Testament
- (4) The Dead Sea Scrolls
  - (a) About 200 of the 800 manuscripts found in caves near the Dead Sea in the 1940s and 1950s are books of the Hebrew Bible, though most are fragmentary. This includes 39 copies of Psalms, 36 of Deuteronomy, 22 of Isaiah, 17 of Exodus, 15 of Genesis, 13 of Leviticus, and 8 of Numbers.
  - (b) While Isaiah A and Isaiah B from the first Dead Sea cave contain the traditional Masoretic text, scrolls that were found in other caves contain variations from the Masoretic. F.M. Cross divides the text types into “Egyptian, Palestinian, and Proto-Masoretic varieties” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 102). Also among the Dead Sea Scrolls are fragments of translations of the Old Testament in other languages.
  - (c) The doctrine of preservation tells us that the pure Word of God would not be hidden away in a remote cave for 1,900 years of church history and that the traditional Hebrew text should not be revised according to such manuscripts.
- (5) The Samaritan Pentateuch, which was used by the Samaritans, a people of mixed religion, part Jewish and part pagan
- (6) Quotations from Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate
- (7) Quotations from Josephus, a Jewish historian
- (8) Hebrew Scribal Tradition
- (9) Variants found in the margin of Hebrew manuscripts
- (10) The Targums, which are commentaries on the Old Testament text by Hebrew rabbis
- (11) The *Juxta Hebraica* of Jerome for the Psalms
- (12) Different Hebrew vowels. Having rejected the vowel points of the Masoretic Hebrew Text as part of the inspired Word of God, modern textual critics feel at

liberty to modify them. The Preface to the New Revised Standard Version (1989) says, "...where a more probable and convincing reading can be obtained by assuming different vowels, this has been done." In other words, the changes based on different vowels are pure conjecture.

### (13) More Conjecture

- (a) In many places the modern versions include textual readings that are not based on any Hebrew text or any ancient translation. At this point in the Kittel Hebrew Bible the footnotes read simply "L" (which stands for the Latin word *legendum*, meaning "which read") and the words "PROBABLY this." Dr. Waite observes, "In other words, there's no evidence, no document. It is just conjecture and guesswork." The Preface to the New Revised Standard Version describes these conjectures in this way: "Occasionally it is evident that the text has suffered in transmission and that none of the versions provides a satisfactory restoration. Here we can only follow the best judgment of competent scholars as to the most probable reconstruction of the original text. Such reconstructions are indicated in footnotes by the abbreviation Cn ('Correction')..." Thus in the NRSV, the noble word "correction" stands for the ennobled work of textual conjecture.
- (b) God repeatedly says that man lives by every word of God (Deut. 8:3; Mat. 4:4; Lk. 4:4); it makes no sense that He would require man to settle the textual issue, an issue of life or death, by conjecture or guesswork.

## 2. Examples of the changes made in the Old Testament found in the modern English versions.

- a. The New American Standard Version Old Testament (1967) is based in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, as modified by "light from lexicography," cognate languages, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (NASV, Preface).
- b. The New International Version Old Testament (1973) is based on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, as modified by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch, ancient scribal traditions, variant Hebrew readings in the margin of the Masoretic Text, the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, the *Juxta Hebraica* of Jerome, and variation in the vowel points (NIV, Preface, 1983).
- c. The New Revised Standard Version Old Testament (1989) is based on the 1983 *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, as modified by the following sources: translations into Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and Latin, the Dead Sea Scrolls, subsidiary Jewish traditions, conjectures by "the best judgment of competent scholars."
- d. The New King James Version Old Testament (1982) is based on the 1977 Stuttgart

edition of Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, as modified by the following sources: The Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, a "variety of ancient versions," and the Dead Sea Scrolls (NKJV, Preface).

- e. Using 103 passages as a test, Dr. Waite found that the NASV and the NIV favor the Greek Septuagint over the Masoretic Hebrew 73 times. This research can be found in *Departures from the Traditional Hebrew and Greek Text*, available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ [B.F.T. #986].
- f. Examples of the departures from the Masoretic Hebrew are found in Gen. 4:8 and 4:15.

Genesis 4:8

KJV: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

RSV: "Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go out to the field.' And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him."

NIV: "Now Cain said to his brother Abel, 'Let's go out to the field.' And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him."

In a footnote the NIV cites its authority for this addition to the Hebrew Masoretic text as follows: "Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac." A footnote in the *NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament* (1979) says: "This Hebrew reading and translation is CONJECTURED on the basis of the early versions listed above in Note 1."

Genesis 4:15

KJV: "And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."

RSV: "Then the LORD said to him, 'Not so! If any one slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who came upon him should kill him."

NIV: "But the Lord said to him, 'Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over.' then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him."

The NIV footnote gives its authority for this addition to the Hebrew text as follows: "Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac."

## **DID JESUS CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES USE A GREEK TRANSLATION OR THE HEBREW ITSELF?**

It is common to speak of a Greek translation of the Old Testament, called **THE SEPTUAGINT**, as existing in Christ's day and as accepted and used generally by Jews in Palestine, even as quoted by Jesus and the Apostles. Is this true?

1. The evidence as to the existence of a standardized, commonly used Greek translation of the entire Old Testament in Jesus' day is vague.

- a. The story that a group of scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek in 250 to 150 B.C. is clearly legendary. The letter of Aristeas is dubious in the highest degree, containing, as it does, statements that are fictitious upon their very face. "A letter, purporting to be written by a certain Aristeas to his brother Philocrates during the reign of Ptolomy Philadelphus (285-246 BC), relates how Philadelphus, persuaded by his librarian to get a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures for his royal library, appealed to the high priest at Jerusalem, who sent seventy-two elders (six from each of the twelve tribes) to Alexandria with an official copy of the Law. There in seventy-two days they made a translation which was read before the Jewish community amid great applause, and then presented it to the king. From the number of the translators it became known (somewhat inaccurately) as the Septuagint" (Moorman). "Its claims to authenticity were demolished by Dr. Hody two centuries ago (*De bibliorum textibus originalibus*, Oxon., 1705). Clearly the writer is not a Greek, but a Jew, whose aim is to glorify his race and to disseminate information about their sacred books" (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). Thus even the name *Septuagint* is based on a fable. For this reason it is also called the Egyptian Text.
- b. The extensive research of Paul Kahle has demonstrated that there was no Septuagint prior to the time of Christ. "Paul Kahle, a famous OT scholar who has done extensive work in the Septuagint, does not believe that there was one original old Greek version and that consequently the manuscripts of the Septuagint (so-called) cannot be traced back to one archetype. The theory, proposed and developed largely by him, is that the LXX had its origin in numerous oral, and subsequently written translations for use in the services after the reading of the Hebrew original. Later an official standardized version of the Law was made, but did not entirely replace the older versions, while for the rest of the books there never was a standard Jewish translation, but only a variety of versions" (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*). Frederic Kenyon, while not agreeing with Kahle, acknowledged that he made a strong case.
- c. There is no manuscript evidence of a Greek Old Testament that dates before Christ. At best there is a fragment of one small portion of the Law. The earliest of the

extant manuscripts of a Greek translation of the Old Testament date to 200 years AFTER CHRIST. One possible exception is the Ryland Papyrus (No. 458), which has a few portions of Deut. 23-28. It is possible that this fragment dates to 150 B.C., though this is not certain. Thus the actual manuscript evidence is highly inconclusive. The best we can assume from the extant manuscript evidence is that it is possible that there was a translation of the Law into Greek prior to the time of Christ.

d. Conclusion in regard to the history of the “Septuagint” --

- (1) At best, the evidence hints at a formal translation only of the Pentateuch in Alexandria. The *New Bible Dictionary* says that it is probable that a translation of the Pentateuch was made at one time and place and that the other books of the O.T. were then translated into Greek piecemeal by various individuals later. Subsequently, the name *Septuagint* was extended to cover this hodge-podge of translations.
- (2) Though there might have been a complete translation of the Old Testament in Greek by the time of Christ, there is no evidence showing that it was one that was produced with any authority acceptable to most Jews or that it was commonly received among the Jews.

2. For the following reasons we do not believe that the Lord Jesus or the apostles quoted a Greek translation, even if one was then available:

- a. To think that the Jews in Israel, with their pride of language and tradition, would stoop to use a hodge-podge Greek translation from Egypt, which was a hotbed of Greek philosophy-tinged Jewish cults, is unreasonable.
- b. The Lord Jesus spoke of the jots and tittles of the Old Testament (Mat. 5:18), and this refers specifically to the Hebrew language. The *jot* (or *jod*) is the tenth and smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It can be observed in the King James Bible in the heading to Psalm 119:73-80. The *tittle* is a tiny part of a Hebrew letter; in particular it is that part that distinguishes the *daleth* (see the heading to Psalm 119:25-32) from the *resh* (see the heading to Psalm 119:153-160). A Greek translation has no jots or tittles.
- c. The Lord Jesus referred to the Old Testament by its Hebrew division rather than by its Greek division.
  - (1) See Luke 24:44 -- Christ referred to the things “which were written in THE LAW of Moses, and in THE PROPHETS, and in THE PSALMS, concerning me.” This is precisely the order of the Old Testament in Hebrew, but it is not the

order of the Greek Old Testament. In Greek the order is the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, as in the English Bible. “The phrase ‘in the Psalms’ makes it the complete threefold division of the Hebrew canon: the law of Moses (Torah); the prophets (Naviim); and the Psalms or Writings (Kethuvim). It is called the ‘TANACH’ today by the Jews, taking the ‘TA’ for ‘TORAH,’ the ‘NA’ from ‘NAVIIM,’ and the ‘CH’ for ‘KETHUVIM.’ This is the one abbreviation for the entire Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament. Christ put His hand on the entire Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text that existed then and AUTHORIZED it” (D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 34).

- (2) See Matthew 23:35 -- When the Lord Jesus Christ referred to the first and last prophets that were martyred in the Old Testament, He referred to them by the order of the Hebrew Text rather than by the order of the Greek Septuagint. “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar” (Mat. 23:35). By this statement, the Lord Jesus charged the Jewish leaders with the deaths of the prophets throughout the Old Testament age, and He used the Hebrew canon. Abel was killed in Genesis (chapter 4) and Zacharias in 2 Chronicles (24:20-22). This follows the order of the Hebrew Old Testament, which begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Chronicles. The Greek Septuagint, on the other hand, ends with the prophets (concluding with Malachi) followed by some apocryphal books. The Septuagint translated by Lancelot Brenton and first published in 1851, for example, ends with the following apocryphal books: I Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Children, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, I-IV Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

3. What about those places in the New Testament which appear to be quotations from the Septuagint?

- a. Since the earliest extant copies of the Septuagint are of late date, it is just as possible that the Septuagint is quoting the New Testament, as it is that the apostles are quoting the Septuagint. “How do we know that the present text of the Septuagint was not that found in those Greek OT translations of the second century AD by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotian, or even that of Origen and his *Hexapla*. If this were the case, this text would follow that of the NT and you might have these translators quoting the OT quotes found in the NT rather than vice versa!” (D.A. Waite).
- b. In fact, what we have in the New Testament is the Spirit of God quoting from the Old Testament in an expansive, interpretive manner. “Does a mere similarity in wording of the NT to that of the Greek OT necessarily mean that those were direct



quotations? Is not God the Holy Spirit, who inspired the very words of the OT and the NT, able to pick and choose what set of words He wishes to employ to reveal His truth in the NT? Is He bound to His own words exactly on every occasion in the OT Hebrew text, or does He not have liberty to alter, reinterpret, add to, or subtract from that text as He presents truth in the New Testament?” (D.A. Waite).

- c. From my own examination of the Old Testament quotations in the New, I see no reason to believe that the apostles were quoting from a Greek translation. Consider the following study from 1 Corinthians. (The quotations from the Septuagint are from “The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English,” translated by Lancelot Brenton and first published in London in 1851. It is based on the Vaticanus Old Testament Greek text, “with some reliance on other texts, particularly Alexandrinus.”)

1 CORINTHIANS 1:19

“For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

This is not an actual quote from any one Old Testament passage but is a general reference to statements such as those found in Job 5:12-13 and Jer. 8:9. There is no reason to believe Paul is citing the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:31

“That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

This is from Jeremiah 9:24.

MASORETIC “But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

LXX “but let him that boasts boast in this, the understanding and knowing that I am the Lord that exercise mercy, and judgment, and righteousness upon the earth; for in these things is my pleasure, saith the Lord.”

This is more of a general reference and summary than an actual quotation. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

This is from Isaiah 64:4.

MASORETIC “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor

perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”

LXX “From of old we have not heard, neither have our eyes seen a God beside thee, and they works which thou wilt perform to them that wait for mercy.”

This is a vague reference rather than an actual quotation. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:19

“For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.”

This is from Job 5:13.

MASORETIC “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.”

LXX “who takes the wise in their wisdom, and subverts the counsel of the crafty.”

This is an exact quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew and is definitely not based on the LXX.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:20

“And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.”

This is from Psalm 94:11.

MASORETIC “The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.”

LXX “The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.”

This is a slightly altered quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew, changing “thoughts of man” to “thoughts of the wise.” There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:9

“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.”

This is from Deut. 25:4.

MASORETIC “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”

LXX “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treads out the corn.”

This is a slightly altered quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew, adding “the mouth.”  
The LXX reads the same. There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:7

“...as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

This is from Exodus 32:6.

MASORETIC “And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.”

LXX “And having risen early on the morrow, he offered whole burnt-offerings, and offered a peace-offering; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.”

This is an exact quotation of the Hebrew Masoretic. The LXX reads the same.  
There is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:21

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.”

This is from Isaiah 28:11.

MASORETIC “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.”

LXX “by reason of the contemptuous words of the lips, by means of another language: for they shall speak to this people, saying to them.”

This is a modified quotation of the Masoretic Hebrew and is definitely not based on the LXX. The LXX is an inaccurate paraphrase here, as it is in many places.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:54

“... the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

This is from Isaiah 25:8.

MASORETIC “He will swallow up death in victory...”

LXX “Death has prevailed and swallowed men up...”

It is not an exact quote but is more of a reference. There is no reason to believe it

is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:55

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

This is from Hosea 13:14.

MASORETIC “...O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.”

LXX “...where is thy penalty, O death? O Hades, where is thy sting?”

Paul is not actually quoting from Hosea but is expressing a similar thought. Again, there is no reason to believe it is based on the LXX rather than the Hebrew.

- e. Dr. D.A. Waite offers a final important comment on this issue: “But suppose you reject this thought. Does it necessarily mean, just because there appears to be a similarity in wording, and in some instances perhaps following the Greek OT more closely than the Hebrew that this is some sort of proof that the Greek OT is somehow superior to the Masoretic Text? Most assuredly not! ... God did not inspire the Greek words of the OT, only the Hebrew words! This is a very important distinction and caution which must be borne in mind in this matter of OT translation.”

4. Should the “Septuagint” be used to correct and modify the Hebrew Masoretic text?

- a. It should not be used because it is not the inspired and preserved Scripture and its history and character are deeply questionable.
- b. It should not be used because it is inadequate as a translation. Jack Moorman observes: “...the Pentateuch is generally well done, though it occasionally paraphrases anthropomorphism’s offensive to Alexandrian Jews, disregards consistency in religious technical terms, and shows its impatience with the repetitive technical descriptions in Exodus by mistakes, abbreviations, and wholesale omissions. Comparatively few books attain to the standard of the Pentateuch; most are of medium quality, some are very poor. Isaiah as a translation is bad; Esther, Job, Proverbs are free paraphrases. The original LXX version of Job was much shorter than the Hebrew; it was subsequently filled in with interpretations from Theodotion. Proverbs contains things not in the Hebrew text at all, and Hebrew sentiments are freely altered to suit the Greek outlook. The rendering of Daniel was so much of a paraphrase that it was replaced, perhaps in the first century AD, by a later translation (generally attributed to Theodotion, but differing from his principles and antedating him), and the original LXX rendering is nowadays to be found in

only two MSS and the Syriac. One of the translators of Jeremiah sometimes rendered Hebrew words by Greek words that conveyed similar sound but utterly dissimilar meaning” (Moorman, *Forever Settled*). Dr. Donald Waite summarizes: “It can be clearly seen ... that the Septuagint is inaccurate and inadequate and deficient as a translation. To try to reconstruct the Hebrew Text (as many connected with the modern versions are attempting to do) from such a loose and unacceptable translation would be like trying to reconstruct the Greek New Testament Text from the Living Bible of Ken Taylor!!” (Waite, *The Defense of the King James Bible*).

## **WHAT ABOUT THE SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS IN THE HEBREW MASORETIC TEXT?**

1. In most cases there are logical solutions to these apparent contradictions. My book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties* offers solutions to a wide variety of problems in the Old Testament.

2. Consider the case of King Jehoiachin’s age, as follows:

**2 KINGS 24:8** – “Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother’s name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.”

**2 CHRONICLES 36:9** – “Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.”

The contradiction between these accounts is merely apparent and not real, as they refer to different aspects of Jehoiachin’s reign. “It is important to remember that with the biblical method of reckoning the beginning of the reign of a king may be given from his anointing or his accession—or both. Following the deportation of his father, Jehoiachin legally became king over Judah when he was 8 years old (2 Chronicles 36:9), but his mother ruled for him as queen (Jeremiah 13:18) until he was 18 (2 Kings 24:8). Three months later both king and queen mother were deported (2 Kings 24:12)” (Robert Sargent).

## **CONCLUSION**

Following are conclusions by three Bible believing scholars:

1. Robert Dick Wilson, professor at Princeton Seminary and proficient in over 40 languages -- “In 144 cases of transliteration from Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Moabite into Hebrew and in 40 cases of the opposite, or 184 in all, the evidence shows that for 2300 to 3900 years the text of the proper names in the Hebrew Bible has been transmitted with the most minute accuracy. That the original scribes should have written them with such close conformity to correct philological principles is a wonderful proof of their thorough care and scholarship;

further, that the Hebrew text should have been transmitted by copyists through so many centuries is *a phenomenon unequalled in the history of literature*. ... The proof that the copies of the original documents have been handed down with substantial correctness for more than 2,000 years cannot be denied” (Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, 1959, pp. 70-71).

2. Dr. Donald Waite, who has a Th.D. in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary -- “Even if there are seeming contradictions, I feel it is imperative to go by what the Traditional Masoretic text has as its reading and let the Lord figure out what may seem contradictions to us. Keep what God has given and preserved through the ages and let the Lord figure out why. ... The editors of these new versions have footnotes that depart from the Masoretic text. They often decide the issue on the basis of pure guesswork! But how do you know their decision is the correct one? Just leave the Hebrew text as it is. ... Never be ashamed of the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text that underlies the King James Bible!! It was accumulated by the Jews in fulfillment of Romans 3:1-2. We agree with Dean John William Burgon who wrote of ‘the INCREDIBLE FOLLY OF TINKERING THE HEBREW TEXT’ [from a letter April 8, 1885, appearing in the *Guardian* as quoted in *John William Burgon, Late Dean of Chichester--A Biography*, 1892, by Edward Mayrick Goulburn, Vol. II. p. 241). [B.F.T. #1619] (Waite, *The King James Bible Defended*, p. 31, 32).

3. Dr. Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard -- “Because the Scriptures are forever relevant, they have been preserved down through the ages by God’s special providence. The reality of this providential preservation of the Scriptures was proclaimed by the Lord Himself during His life on earth. *Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled* (Matt. 5:18). *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail* (Luke 16:17). Here our Lord Jesus assures us that the Old Testament in common use among the Jews during His earthly ministry was an absolutely trustworthy reproduction of the original text written by Moses and other inspired writers” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 90). “Unbelieving Jewish scribes transmitted this traditional Hebrew Old Testament text, blindly but faithfully, until the dawn of the Protestant Reformation. As Augustine said long ago, these Jewish scribes were the librarians of the Christian Church. In the providence of God they took care of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures until at length the time was ripe for Christians to make general use of them. ... The Amoraim were followed in the sixth century by the Masoretes (Traditionalists) to whom the Masoretic (Traditional) Old Testament text is due. ... It was this Traditional (Masoretic) text which was printed at the end of the medieval period. ... Thus it was that the Hebrew Old Testament text, divinely inspired and providentially preserved, was restored to the Church, to the circle of true believers” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 93).

## REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE HEBREW TEXT

## UNDERLYING THE KING JAMES BIBLE

1. When did the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament begin to be questioned?
2. What passage says God assigned the Jews to keep the Old Testament Scriptures?
3. Which group among the Jews was assigned be the keepers of the Scripture?
4. In what day was there a revival within the Jewish priesthood and the Old Testament canon was purified and preserved?
5. What does the name “Masorete” mean?
6. Who were the Masoretes?
7. The Masoretes kept the Old Testament during what period of time?
8. How many mistakes would the Masoretes allow on one sheet before they threw it away?
9. According to the Masoretes, the book of Genesis contained 78,100 Hebrew letters. How many letters would they allow to be omitted or changed in one manuscript?
10. According to Jewish tradition, when did the Hebrew vowel points originate?
11. The Bible says God imparted His revelation in “words”; is it possible to have words without vowels?
12. Which Hebrew text was the first one to be printed?
13. In what century was it first printed?
14. Which Hebrew text was used for all of the Reformation Bibles?
15. Was Rudolf Kittel, editor of the Kittel Hebrew Bible, sound in the faith?
16. How many changes to the Masoretic Hebrew text are suggested in the footnotes of the new Kittel Hebrew Bibles?
17. What is the Septuagint?
18. According to D.A. Waite, why should the Septuagint not be used to correct the Hebrew text?
19. When were the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered?
20. How do we know that the traditional Hebrew text should not be revised according to manuscripts found in the Dead Sea caves?
21. What are Targums?
22. When God says that man lives by every word of God, does it make sense that He would require that man would have to settle the textual issue by conjecture or guesswork?
23. Does the New International Version modify the Hebrew Masoretic text?
24. Is there good evidence for the existence of a standardized, commonly used Greek translation of the entire Old Testament in Jesus’ day?
25. What are three reasons why we know that Jesus Christ and the apostles did not quote a Greek translation?

## II. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE THEORIES UNDERLYING THE MODERN GREEK TEXT ARE HERETICAL

### Section Summary

1. What is modern textual criticism?
2. Why We Reject Modern Textual Criticism
  - a. Its goal is unscriptural
  - b. Its theories are strange and unscriptural
  - c. Its rules are unsettled and constantly changing
  - d. Its fruit has been uncertainty and skepticism
3. Conclusion

### WHAT IS MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM?

1. Textual criticism is the application of modern linguistic theories to the recovery of ancient documents. The theories of modern textual criticism were initially developed over a period of roughly 100 years from the late 1700s to the late 1800s. During that introductory period its popularity was limited to textual scholars, for the most part, while it was resisted by Bible believers in general. After the publication of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament in 1881, the theories of modern textual criticism quickly gained dominancy in the field of biblical scholarship.

2. Modern textual criticism was devised largely by men who treated the Bible like another book and who either did not believe in the doctrine of Bible preservation or refused to predicate their textual theories on this doctrine. We will document this more extensively later in these studies. Here we will give two examples.

- a. Karl Lachmann, the first textual critic to entirely reject the Received Text, was a “classical scholar” who approached the Bible in the same way that he approached ordinary classical books. Bruce Metzger, who says Lachmann is one of the most important names in the history of modern textual criticism, admits that Lachmann “ventured to apply to the New Testament the criteria that he had used in editing texts of the classics” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, p. xxiii).
- b. Westcott and Hort, the editors of the influential Greek New Testament of 1881, operated under the following principle: “In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book. No special considerations are to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).



3. Modern textual criticism claims that the Traditional Greek Text, the Reformation Text, is corrupt and has a special distaste for it. (There is a strange duplicity here on the part of the textual critics and their supporters, in that on the one hand they claim that the difference between texts is not very large and not doctrinal and that this issue should not therefore be divisive, while on the other hand they attack the Traditional Text of Scripture as gravely defective, corrupt, flawed, and full of errors.)

- a. This was recognized in the 19th century by Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney: “Their common traits may be said to be AN ALMOST CONTEMPTUOUS DISMISSAL OF THE RECEIVED TEXT, as unworthy not only of confidence, but almost of notice; the rejection of the great mass of the codices of the common text as recent and devoid of nearly all authority; and the settlement of the text by the testimony of a very few MSS. for which they claim a superior antiquity, with the support of a few fathers and versions, whom they are pleased to regard as judicious and trustworthy” (Robert Dabney, *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 354, 55).
- b. Consider this quote from the Preface to the Revised Standard Version of 1951: “The King James Version has GRAVE DEFECTS. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that these DEFECTS ARE SO MANY AND SO SERIOUS as to call for revision of the English translation.”
- c. Westcott and Hort despised the Received Text. Following is what F.J.A. Hort wrote in 1851, when he was only 23 years old and before he had developed his textual theories or done any serious research in this field: “I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on with THE VILLAINOUS TEXTUS RECEPTUS...Think of THAT VILE TEXTUS RECEPTUS leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones” (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, vol. 1, p. 211). Textual critic Ernest Colwell observed that Hort’s goal was to *dethrone the Received Text* (Colwell, *Scribal Habits in Early Papyri, The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, Abingdon, 1965, p. 370). Wilbur Pickering observes: “It appears that Hort did not arrive at his theory through unprejudiced intercourse with the facts. Rather, he deliberately set out to construct a theory that would vindicate his preconceived animosity for the Received Text” (*Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 3). Note, too, that Hort was deceived into thinking that the Received Text leans “entirely on late manuscripts.”
- d. Richard Bentley, a forerunner to the modern textual critics, wanted to move away from the “BARBAROUS” style of the Received Text (R. Bentley, “Letter to

Archbishop Wake,” *Works*, 1838, cited from Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 64).

- e. E.A. Hutton likened the Traditional Text to a magpie’s nest. “Oftentimes it picked up a diamond, and sometimes a bit of broken glass, sometimes it gives us brass or lacquer without distinction from the nobler metal. It was for all the world like a magpie, and THE RESULT IS NOT UNLIKE A MAGPIE’S NEST” (Hutton, *An Atlas of Textual Criticism*, 1911, p. 58). Far from seeing the providential hand of God in the history of the traditional text, this critic saw only a dumb magpie!
- f. Caspar Gregory rejoiced when the British & Foreign Bible Society finally published the critical Greek text in 1904 because “It was desirable for the cause of the Bible, of the Church, and of science that the great apparatus of that society should cease to deluge Europe with THIS IMPERFECT TEXT” (Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, 1907, p. 464 f.).
- g. Alexander Souter referred to the Received Text a “SHACKLE” (Souter, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1912, p. 100).
- h. Frederic Kenyon described the manuscripts representing the Received Text as the “LEAST TRUSTWORTHY that existed” and “FULL OF INACCURACIES” (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 104).
- i. Bruce Metzger calls the TR “CORRUPT” and Christian people’s love for it “SUPERSTITIOUS” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 106). He further calls it “DEBASED” and “DISFIGURED” (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, xxi, xxiii).
- j. Barbara Aland called the TR “FLAWED, preserving the text of the New Testament in a form FULL OF ERRORS” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998,” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>).

This bias, based upon a mythical recension, has tainted most of the serious research into ancient texts and translations since the beginning of the 20th century. Modern textual critics are so biased against the Received Text as to be undependable as witnesses to the textual evidence. After examining the way influential textual critics misuse the manuscript evidence, Wilbur Pickering observed, “It seems clear that the ‘Byzantine’ text cannot win in a court presided over by a judge of Kenyon’s bent” and “there is reason to ask whether editors with an anti-Byzantine bias can be trusted to report the evidence in an impartial manner” (Pickering, *Identity of the New Testament Text*, ch. 4).

4. The Greek text produced by modern textual criticism is much shorter than the Received Text New Testament.

- a. It is shorter by 2,886 words. This is equivalent to removing the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the Bible (Jack Moorman, *Missing in Modern Bibles: Is the full Story Being Told*, Bible for Today, 1981).
- b. Modern textual criticism removes or questions dozens of entire verses:

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14  
Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20  
Luke 17:36; 23:17  
John 5:4; 7:53-8:11  
Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29  
Romans 16:24  
1 John 5:7

- c. It further removes a significant portion of 147 other verses.

5. Modern textual criticism was not popular until the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek N.T. in 1881. The first two English versions of any influence based on this text were the English Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901.

6. Modern textual criticism favors **A FEW GREEK UNCIALS** (e.g. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of other manuscripts of similar character over the vast majority of the 5,471 Greek manuscripts and lectionaries extant (for the number of extant manuscripts I have followed Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, pp. 102, 106, 128, 163; plus I have added the 20 additional papyri that are listed in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, 2001 printing). Writing in 1883, John Burgon observed, "...especially B [Vaticanus] and Aleph [Sinaiticus], have within the last twenty years established a tyrannical ascendancy over the imagination of the Critics, which can only be fitly spoken of as a blind superstition" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 11). This handful of Egyptian manuscripts preferred by modern textual critics was called by John Owen in the 17th century "the spurious brood" and by John Burgon in the 19th century the "little handful of suspicious documents" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 78) and the "little handful of singularly licentious documents" (*Ibid.*) and "those eccentric exemplars" (*The Traditional Text of the Gospels*, p. 31). Since the discovery of the Egyptian papyri in the 20th century, the number of Alexandrian manuscripts has increased; but compared to the vast number that support the Traditional text, they still represent a very tiny and "eccentric" minority.

## THE VATICANUS (B)

### a. Introductory facts:

- (1) The Vaticanus Greek codex gets its name from its location, which is the Vatican Library. Its history is unknown prior to 1475, when it first appeared in that library's catalog.
  - (2) It is thought to date from the mid-4th century and to have originated in Egypt. "Hort was inclined to assign it to Rome, and others to southern Italy or Caesarea; but the association of its text with the Coptic (Egyptian) Versions and with Origen, and the style of writing (notably the Coptic forms used in some of the titles), point rather to Egypt and Alexandria" (Frederic Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*).
  - (3) It contains most of the Old Testament (except Genesis 1:1 - 46:28; 2 Kings 2, 5-7, 10-13; and Psalm 105:27 - 137:6) but lacks large portions of the New Testament, such as Matthew 3, the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon), Hebrews 9:14 - 13:25, and all of Revelation.
- b. Erasmus, the first editor of the printed Received Text, was familiar with the Vaticanus because in 1533 a correspondent in Rome sent him 365 of its readings in a vain attempt to demonstrate their superiority (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*).
- c. The home of Codex Vaticanus is unholy and is certainly not the place one would expect to find the preserved Word of God. I toured the Vatican in 1992 and again in 2003 and 2005 and was astounded at how pagan the place is. It reminds me of the many idolatrous temples we have visited during our years of missionary work in Asia. Fitting to the home of the man who claims the titles and position of Jesus Christ and who accepts adulation, the Vatican is a monument to idolatry and blasphemy and man's shameless rebellion to God's revelation. There are statues and paintings of all sorts of pagan gods and goddesses; there are statues of Mary and the Popes and the "saints" and angels and the infant Jesus and crucifixes. The Vatican Library contains large paintings of Isis and Mercury. The "Cathedra Petri" or "Chair of Peter" contains woodcarvings that represent the labors of Hercules. The massive obelisk in the center of St. Peter's Piazza is a pagan object from Egypt. Near the main altar of St. Peter's is a bronze statue of Peter sitting in a chair. It is reported that this statue was originally the pagan god Jupiter that was taken from the Pantheon in Rome (when it was a pagan temple) and moved into St. Peter's Basilica and renamed Peter! Jupiter was one of the chief gods of ancient Rome and was called the "pater" (father) in Latin. One foot of the statue is made of silver and Catholic pilgrims superstitiously touch or kiss it. In fact, the Vatican is one gigantic

idol. The great altar over the supposed tomb of St. Peter is overwhelmed by massive, golden, spiraling columns that look like coiling serpents. One can almost hear the sinister hiss. The Vatican is also a graveyard. Beneath “St. Peter’s” Basilica are rows of marble caskets containing dead Popes! A life-size statue of each Pope is carved in marble and reclines on the lid of his casket. Candles and incense are burning profusely. In the supposed tomb of Peter, 99 oil lamps are kept burning day and night. For those familiar with pagan religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, the origin of such things is obvious. The place is as eerie and pagan as any temple in darkest India. Pitifully deluded Catholics light their pagan candles in a vain attempt to merit God’s blessing after the fashion of benighted Hindus. There is no biblical authority for any of it. The Lord Jesus warned the Pharisees, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition” (Mark 7:9). The Vatican is one of the last places on earth one would expect to find the preserved Word of God.

- d. Outsiders were not allowed to use the Vaticanus manuscript until the late 1800s. “The Vaticanus New Testament was not seen by scholars until [1809] when Napoleon captured Rome and brought the manuscript back to Paris, where it was studied for a short time [until 1815]. If not for this, it is certain that its contents would still be locked up secure in the Vatican Library today” (<http://www.christianseparatist.org/ast/hist/uncial.htm>). Tischendorf and Tregelles were allowed to look at it between the years 1843-1866 but they were not allowed to copy any of it; they were examined before entering the library to make sure they did not have writing materials and guards were posted to make sure that they made no notes. Tischendorf was forced to wait for several months before being allowed to look at the manuscript for only six hours. Tregelles was allowed to look at the manuscript for three months and each day he memorized a section and then copied it down in the evening. By this means he eventually published his memorized copy of the Vaticanus New Testament. Here is a description of how visitors who were interested in the Vaticanus manuscript were treated by the Catholic authorities: “In 1845 the great English scholar Tregelles was allowed indeed to see it but not to copy a word. His pockets were searched before he might open it, and all writing materials were taken away. Two clerics stood beside him and snatched away the volume if he looked too long at any passage” (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, 4th ed., 1939, pp. 138-139). It was not until 1868 that the Vatican published the entire Vaticanus New Testament, and that was only because it had become so familiar to scholars by the aforementioned means that the Pope was forced to publish it. The attitude Rome displayed toward those who sought to examine the Vaticanus codex is indicative of an institution that has burned Bible translators, forbidden the reading of the Bible in the vernacular languages, condemned the Bible Societies, and hurled anathemas against those who claim the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. While Baptists and Protestants were diligently bringing the Scriptures to light “so the plough-man could understand

it” (as stated by translator William Tyndale), Rome was just as diligently trying to keep God’s Word from the common man. This is a historical fact which we have already documented in these studies (and which we have documented more extensively in *Rome and the Bible: Tracing the History of the Roman Catholic Church and Its Persecution of the Bible and of Bible Believers*, available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, fbns@wayoflife.org, 866-295-4143).

e. Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus manuscript as their chief authority above all other Greek manuscripts. It was “their touchstone” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 14).

f. The Vaticanus is very strange and corrupt:

(1) It was corrected by revisers in the 8th, 10th, and 15th centuries (W. Eugene Scott, *Codex Vaticanus*, 1996).

(2) The entire manuscript has been mutilated.

(a) “...every letter has been run over with a pen, making exact identification of many of the characters impossible” (*Vaticanus and Sinaiticus* - [www.waynejackson.freemove.co.uk/kjv/v2.htm](http://www.waynejackson.freemove.co.uk/kjv/v2.htm)). This was probably done in the 10th or 11th century. All of the revision and overwriting “makes precise paleographic analysis impossible” (Scott, *Codex Vaticanus*). Dr. David Brown observes: “I question the ‘great witness’ value of any manuscript that has been overwritten, doctored, changed and added to for more than 10 centuries” (*The Great Uncials*).

(b) Missing portions were supplied in the 15th century by copying other Greek manuscripts. This segment (pages 1519-1536) of the manuscript “is catalogued separately as minuscule 1957” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 109).

(c) In the Gospels it leaves out 749 entire sentences and 452 clauses, plus 237 other words, all of which are found in hundreds of other Greek manuscripts. The total number of words omitted in B in the Gospels alone is 2,877 as compared with the majority of manuscripts (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 75).

(3) Vaticanus omits Mark 16:9-20, but a blank space is left for that section of Scripture.

(a) The following testimony is by John Burgon, who examined Vaticanus personally: “To say that in the Vatican Codex (B), which is unquestionably the oldest we possess, St. Mark’s Gospel ends abruptly at the eighth verse of

the sixteenth chapter, and that the customary subscription (*Kata Mapkon*) follows, is true; but it is far from being the whole truth. It requires to be stated in addition that the scribe, whose plan is found to have been to begin every fresh book of the Bible at the top of the next ensuing column to that which contained the concluding words of the preceding book, has at the close of St. Mark's Gospel deviated from his else invariable practice. HE HAS LEFT IN THIS PLACE ONE COLUMN ENTIRELY VACANT. IT IS THE ONLY VACANT COLUMN IN THE WHOLE MANUSCRIPT -- A BLANK SPACE ABUNDANTLY SUFFICIENT TO CONTAIN THE TWELVE VERSES WHICH HE NEVERTHELESS WITHHELD. WHY DID HE LEAVE THAT COLUMN VACANT? What can have induced the scribe on this solitary occasion to depart from his established rule? The phenomenon (I believe I was the first to call distinct attention to it) is in the highest degree significant, and admits only one interpretation. The older manuscript from which Codex B was copied must have infallibly contained the twelve verses in dispute. The copyist was instructed to leave them out -- and he obeyed; but he prudently left a blank space in *memoriam rei*. Never was a blank more intelligible! Never was silence more eloquent! By this simple expedient, strange to relate, the Vatican Codex is made to refute itself even while it seems to be bearing testimony against the concluding verses of St. Mark's Gospel, by withholding them; for it forbids the inference which, under ordinary circumstances, must have been drawn from that omission. It does more. By leaving room for the verses it omits, it brings into prominent notice at the end of fifteen centuries and a half, a more ancient witness than itself" (Burton, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel of St. Mark Vindicated*, 1871, pp. 86-87).

- (b) Wilbur Pickering summarizes this issue: "Codex B is written in three columns and upon completing a book it normally begins the next book at the top of the next column. But between Mark and Luke there is a completely vacant column, the only such column in the codex. Considering that parchment was expensive, the 'wasting' of such a space would be quite unusual" (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, "Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration").
- (4) Vaticanus identifies itself as a product of gnostic corruption in John 1:18, where "the only begotten Son" is changed to "the only begotten God," thus perpetuating the ancient Arian heresy that disassociates the Son of God Jesus Christ from God Himself by claiming that the Word was not the same as the Son. John's Gospel identifies the Son directly with the Word (John 1:1, 18), but by changing "Son" to "God" in verse 18, this direct association is broken.
- (5) Vaticanus contains the false Roman Catholic apocryphal books such as Judith, Tobias, and Baruch (but not the books of the Maccabees).

## THE SINAITICUS (ALEPH)

### a. Its history

- (1) The Sinaiticus codex was discovered by Constantine Tischendorf at St. Catherine's Monastery (Greek Orthodox) at Mt. Sinai. He discovered the first part in 1844 and the second in 1859. In May 1844, on his way to Mt. Sinai, Tischendorf stopped in Rome and had an audience with Pope Gregory XVI. Like Catholicism, the Greek Orthodox Church has a false gospel of grace plus works and sacraments and holds the unscriptural doctrine of venerating relics. St. Catherine's Monastery has one entire room filled with skulls!
- (2) Following is the story of how Tischendorf found the Sinaiticus: "In the year 1844, whilst travelling under the patronage of Frederick Augustus King of Saxony, in quest of manuscripts, Tischendorf reached the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai. Here, observing some old-looking documents in a basketful of papers ready for lighting the stove, he picked them out, and discovered that they were forty-three vellum leaves of the Septuagint Version. He was allowed to take these: but in the desire of saving the other parts of the manuscript of which he heard, he explained their value to the monks, who being now enlightened would only allow him to copy one page, and refused to sell him the rest. On his return he published in 1846 what he had succeeded in getting under the name 'Codex Frederico-Augustanus,' inscribed to his benefactor" (Edward Miller, *A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 24). Some enemies of the defense of the King James Bible have claimed that the manuscripts were not found in a "waste basket," but they were. That is exactly how Tischendorf described it. "I perceived a large and wide basket full of old parchments; and the librarian told me that two heaps like this had been already committed to the flames. What was my surprise to find amid this heap of papers..." (*Narrative of the Discovery of the Sinaitic Manuscript*, p. 23). John Burgon, who was alive when Tischendorf discovered the Sinaiticus and also personally visited St. Catherine's to research ancient manuscripts, testified that the manuscripts "got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent" (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 319, 342).

### b. Some basic facts about Codex Sinaiticus

- (1) The leaves of the codex measure 13 X 15 inches. The text is written in uncial characters, without punctuation except occasional apostrophes and periods. It is written in four columns to the page (except in the poetical books, which are written in two wide columns). There are 48 lines per column (except in the Catholic Epistles, which have 47 lines per column).



- (2) The largest portion of the Sinaiticus (346 leaves, 199 of which are the Old Testament) resides in the British Library and was on display when I visited there on my fifth or sixth trip in April 2003 and was opened to Mark 16, plainly showing the glaring omission of verses 9-20. (Tischendorf eventually persuaded the monks to give the manuscript to the Czar of Russia, and in 1933 the Russian government sold it to the British Museum for 100,000 pounds or about \$500,000. It arrived at the Museum just before Christmas Day, 1933.) Another 43 leaves are at the University Library at Leipzig and 3 partial leaves are at Leningrad. The monks at St. Catherine's discovered several leaves from Genesis in 1975.)

c. The strangeness of Codex Sinaiticus

- (1) The Sinaiticus was written by three different scribes and was corrected later by several others. (This was the conclusion of an extensive investigation by H.J.M. Milne and T.C. Skeat of the British Museum, which was published in *Scribes and Correctors of Codex Sinaiticus*, London, 1938.) Tischendorf counted 14,800 corrections in this manuscript (David Brown, *The Great Uncials*, 2000). Dr. F.H.A. Scrivener, who published *A Full Collation of the Codex Sinaiticus* in 1864 testified: "The Codex is covered with alterations of an obviously correctional character brought in by at least ten different revisers, some of them systematically spread over every page, others occasional, or limited to separate portions of the Ms., many of these being contemporaneous with the first writer, but for the greater part belonging to the sixth or seventh century." Thus it is evident that scribes in bygone centuries did not consider the Sinaiticus to represent a pure text. Why it should be so revered by modern textual critics is a mystery.
- (2) A great amount of carelessness is exhibited in the copying and correction. "Codex Sinaiticus 'abounds with errors of the eye and pen to an extent not indeed unparalleled, but happily rather unusual in documents of first-rate importance.' On many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40 words are dropped through very carelessness. Letters and words, even whole sentences, are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately cancelled; while that gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament" (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*). It is clear that the scribes who copied the Sinaiticus were not faithful men of God who treated the Scriptures with utmost reverence. The total number of words omitted in Aleph in the Gospels alone is 3,455 compared with the Greek Received Text (Burgon, p. 75).
- (3) The first of the revisions was done by Pamphilus (who died in 309 A.D.) against the Hexapla of Origen (James Adair, Jr., "Sinaiticus," *Eerdmans*

*Dictionary of the Bible*). There is a note in the Sinaiticus that says, “Taken and corrected according to the hexapla of Origen: Antonius compared it; I, Pamphilus, corrected it.” The problem with this is that Origen was a heretic of the first order and he changed the text of Scripture on “the authority” of false teachers such as Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ. Origen taught baptismal regeneration, believed in purgatory, taught that all men and even Satan would eventually be saved, believed in the pre-existence of human souls, and taught that the Holy Spirit was the first creature made by God, among other heresies.

- (4) Mark 16:9-20 is omitted in the Sinaiticus, but it was originally there and has been erased.
- (5) The sheet containing the end of the Gospel of Mark and the beginning of Luke and the omission of Mark 16:9-20 was added to the manuscript at some point. “Tischendorf, who discovered the codex, warned that those four pages appeared to be written by a different hand and with different ink than the rest of the manuscript. However that may be, a careful scrutiny reveals the following: the end of Mark and beginning of Luke occur on page 3 (of the four); pages 1 and 4 contain an average of 17 lines of printed Greek text per column (there are four columns per page), just like the rest of the codex; page 2 contains an average of 15.5 lines of printed text per column (four columns); the first column of page 3 contains only twelve lines of printed text and in this way v. 8 occupies the top of the second column, the rest of which is blank (except for some designs); Luke begins at the top of column 3, which contains 16 lines of printed text while column 4 is back up to 17 lines. On page 2 the forger began to spread the letters, displacing six lines of printed text; in the first column of page 3 he got desperate and displaced five lines of printed text, just in one column! In this way he managed to get two lines of v. 8 over onto the second column, avoiding the vacant column (as in B). That second column would accommodate 15 more lines of printed text, which with the other 11 make 26. Verses 9-20 occupy 23.5 such lines, so there is plenty of room for them. It really does seem that there has been foul play, and there would have been no need for it unless the first hand did in fact display the disputed verses. IN ANY EVENT, ALEPH AS IT STANDS IS A FORGERY AND THEREFORE MAY NOT LEGITIMATELY BE ALLEGED AS EVIDENCE AGAINST [THESE VERSES]” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, appendix F, “Mark 16:9-20 and the Doctrine of Inspiration”). F.A. Scrivener believed that the same scribe who copied Vaticanus also copied the pages that have been inserted into Sinaiticus. “...strange to relate, it so happens that the very leaf on which the end of St. Mark’s Gospel and the beginning of St. Luke’s is written (Mark 16:2 -- Luke 1:56), is one of the six leaves of Cod. Aleph which are held to have been written by the scribe of Cod. B. ‘The inference,’ remarks Scrivener, ‘is simple and

direct, that at least in these leaves Codd. B Aleph make but one witness, not two” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 233, quoting Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, p. 337, note 1).

- (6) Sinaiticus includes the apocryphal books (Esdras, Tobit, Judith, I and IV Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus) plus two heretical writings, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas. The apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas is filled with heresies and fanciful allegorizing, claiming, for example, that Abraham was familiar with the Greek alphabet and that water baptism saves the soul. The Shepherd of Hermas is a gnostic writing that presents the Adoptionist heresy that the Christ Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism.
- (7) Sinaiticus exhibits the gnostic influence upon its face. In John 1:18 “the only begotten Son” is changed to “the only begotten God,” thus perpetuating the ancient Arian heresy that disassociates the Son Jesus Christ with God Himself by breaking the clear connection between God of John 1:1 with the Son of John 1:18. See the previous remarks under Vaticanus.

#### **CODEX D (BEZAE)**

- a. This manuscript was owned by the Reformation editor Theodore Beza, who gave it to the University of Cambridge in 1581. Beza considered it of little value, and the reason will become obvious.
- b. Codex D contains both Latin and Greek texts and it appears that the Greek was back translated from Latin. “No known manuscript contains so many bold and extensive interpolations (six hundred, it is said, in the Acts alone) ... Mr. Harris from curious internal evidence, such as THE EXISTENCE IN THE TEXT OF A VITIATED RENDERING OF A VERSE OF HOMER which bears signs of having been retranslated from a Latin translation, infers that the Greek has been made up from the Latin” (Frederick Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 130). Thus the scribe who copied Codex D was so ignorant that he did not know the difference between a verse from the pagan writer Homer and the Holy Scriptures! John Burgon observed that D resembles a Targum (a loose paraphrase or commentary) more than a transcription. Burgon stated that Codex D omits, substitutes, adds, and transposes some 562 words in only three chapters of Luke, and that 250 of the words that are omitted are unique to this manuscript. Burgon concluded that a carelessly executed manuscript like this bears its own testimony of a lack of authenticity and cannot possibly be trusted to witness to the truth.
- c. Even more than Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, Codex D is filled with omissions and changes. The total number of words omitted in D in the Gospels alone is 3,704

compared with the majority of Greek manuscripts (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 75). Burgon notes also that since 25 pages are lost from D, its “omissions in the Gospels may therefore be estimated at 4000” (p. 75, footnote 1). There are also 2,213 additions, 2,121 substitutions, 3,471 transpositions, and 1, 772 modifications. The total number of word differences from the Received Text are 13,281 (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 176).

- d. Codex D contains many readings unique and strange to itself. Edward Miller speaks of “the extreme licentiousness in the scribe or scribes responsible for Codex D, being the product of ignorance and carelessness combined with such looseness of principle...” (*The Causes of Corruption*, 1896, p. 104). “There are also traces of extreme licentiousness in this copy of the Gospels which call for distinct notice. Sometimes words or expressions are substituted: sometimes the sense is changed, and utter confusion introduced: delicate terms or forms are ignored: and a general corruption ensues. ... Constantly to substitute the wrong word for the right one; or at all events to introduce a less significant expression: on countless occasions to mar the details of some precious incident; and to obscure the purpose of the Evangelist by tastelessly and senselessly disturbing the inspired text,—*this* will be found to be the rule with Cod. D throughout” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 179, 183). Consider three examples:
  - (1) D stands alone among manuscripts in 1 Cor. 15:51 with the heretical and nonsensical reading, “... we shall all rise; but we shall not all be changed.”
  - (2) Mark 4:1 is another example. “And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.” In Codex D all of this is changed. It has Christ teaching “towards the sea,” then crossing over and sitting “on the other side of the sea,” then the multitude also “were on the other side of the sea.” Edward Miller observes, “I insist that a MS. which circulates incidents after this fashion cannot be regarded as trustworthy” (*The Traditional Text*, p. 180).
  - (3) In Christ’s genealogy in Luke 3, Codex D reduces the number of names from 77 to 66, and of those 66, many are illicitly brought in from Matthew 1 and others are entirely corrupted, such as making Jehoiakim “the son of Eliakim,” when in fact they are the same person.
  - (4) Between verses four and six of Luke 6, Codex D has this: “On the same day, seeing one working on the Sabbath day, he said to him, ‘Man, if you know what you are doing, you are blessed; but if you do not know, you are accursed and a transgressor of the law.’”

- (5) In Luke 23:53, Codex D adds, "... put before the tomb a great stone which twenty men could scarcely roll."
- e. Codex D frequently mixes one Gospel into another. "... the extent to which in Cod. D interpolations from St. Mark's Gospel are inserted into the Gospel according to St. Luke is even astounding. Between verses 14 and 15 of St. Luke 5 thirty-two words are interpolated from the parallel passage in St. Mark 1:45--2:1; and in the 10th verse of the 6th chapter twelve words are introduced from St. Mark 2:27, 28. ... At the end of the parable of the pounds, the scribe of D ... inserts the 30th verse of St. Matt. 25 at the end of St. Luke 19:29" (Burton and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 176, 177). Burton and Miller give many other examples of this.
- f. Codex D is even bolder at times in its attack upon Christ's deity, resurrection, and ascension than Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. For example, in Luke chapter 24, Codex D omits the following important Scriptures. These were also omitted from former editions of the Nestle Text on the "authority" of D but they were restored to the text because of the papyrus.
- Luke 24:3 -- "of the Lord Jesus" omitted  
 Luke 24:6 -- "he is not here but is risen" omitted  
 Luke 24:12 -- whole verse omitted  
 Luke 24:36 -- "and saith unto them, Peace be unto you" omitted  
 Luke 24:40 -- "And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet" omitted  
 Luke 24:51 -- "and was carried up into heaven" omitted  
 Luke 24:52 -- "worshipped him" omitted

### **Concluding facts about these uncials:**

- a. Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and a handful of similar manuscripts are preferred by modern textual critics above the vast majority.
- (1) Tischendorf was so enamored with the Sinaiticus that he altered the eighth edition of his Greek New Testament (1869-72) in 3,369 instances to conform to this manuscript. For Tischendorf, Sinaiticus "served as the critical standard to establish the text" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 14).
- (2) Westcott and Hort thought that "the original New Testament text had survived in almost perfect condition in these two manuscripts [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus], especially in B [Vaticanus]" (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 66). For Westcott and Hort, Vaticanus was "their touchstone" (Aland, p. 14).

- (3) The Nestles' Greek New Testament combines the readings of the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, as it was based on Tischendorf (who gave preference to the Sinaiticus) and Westcott/Hort (who gave preference to the Vaticanus). "This B Aleph text of the nineteenth century gained universal currency in Eberhard Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, as it was based upon the editions of Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort together with that of Bernhard Weiss (which also gave preference to B)" (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 103). The Nestle's text was merged with the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament beginning with the 3rd edition in 1975, thus bringing the latter more in line with the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. J.K. Elliott observes: "...the general verdict of UBS 3rd edn. is that its text is closer to Westcott and Hort's text. It is in many ways a 'safer' text than the first and second UBS editions insofar as many more of the readings of Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus appear in the UBS 3rd edn." (J.K. Elliott, "The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament: A Short Examination of the Third Edition," *The Bible Translator*, 30, 1979, p. 138).
  - (4) The editors of the New International Version admit that they prefer the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts: "...in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the great Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century AD, are to be preferred over those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR [Received Text]" (Ronald Youngblood, *The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, p. 152). In their footnotes, the translators of the New International Version call the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus "the two most reliable early manuscripts" (footnote to Mark 16:9-20).
  - (5) Kurt and Barbara Aland call the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus "the two important uncials" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 292). They call Vaticanus "by far the most significant of the uncials" (*Ibid.*, p. 109).
  - (6) We could give dozens of pages of similar quotations from modern translators and textual critics. When the new versions say a certain word or verse is not found in the "oldest and best manuscripts," they are referring primarily to Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, together with a handful of other manuscripts, largely fragmentary, which exhibit similar Egyptian readings.
- b. These manuscripts originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy. This is why they are commonly called Alexandrian. "Its [Vaticanus] origin is Lower Egyptian. Hort thinks it akin to the text used by Origen in his *Hexapla*" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, online edition, "Manuscripts of the Bible"). After examining a number of heretical readings in the early Egyptian manuscripts favored by modern textual critics, Dr. Edward Hills concluded: "Thus we see that it is unwise in present-day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on *B* and *Aleph*. For all these documents come from Egypt, and

EGYPT DURING THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CENTURIES WAS A LAND IN WHICH HERESIES WERE RAMPANT. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, *B*, *Aleph*, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 134).

- c. These manuscripts bear evidence of being corrupt above all other Greek uncials or minuscules. Consider this important testimony by John Burgon, who dedicated much of his life to the study of Greek manuscripts and who personally analyzed the Vaticanus in Rome: “When we study the New Testament by the light of such Codexes as B Aleph D L, we find ourselves in an entirely new region of experience; confronted by phenomena not only unique but even portentous. The text has undergone apparently AN HABITUAL, IF NOT SYSTEMATIC, DEPRAVATION; has been manipulated throughout in a wild way. Influences have been demonstrably at work which altogether perplex the judgment. The result is simply calamitous. There are evidences of persistent mutilation, not only of words and clauses, but of entire sentences. The substitution of one expression for another, and the arbitrary transposition of words, are phenomena of such perpetual occurrence, that it becomes evident at last that which lies before us is not so much an ancient copy, as an ancient recension of the Sacred Text. And yet not by any means a recension in the usual sense of the word as an authoritative revision; but only as the name may be applied to the product of individual inaccuracy or caprice, or tasteless assiduity on the part of one or many, at a particular time or in a long series of years. There are reasons for inferring, that we have alighted on five specimens of what the misguided piety of a primitive age is known to have been fruitful in producing. ... THESE CODEXES ABOUND WITH SO MUCH LICENTIOUSNESS OR CARELESSNESS AS TO SUGGEST THE INFERENCE, THAT THEY ARE IN FACT INDEBTED FOR THEIR PRESERVATION TO THEIR HOPELESS CHARACTER. Thus it would appear that an evil reputation ensured their neglect in ancient times; and has procured that they should survive to our own, long after multitudes which were much better had perished in the Master’s service” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated*, 1896, pp. 32, 33).
- d. Vaticanus (B) or Sinaiticus (Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions. “By far the greatest number of innovations, including those which give the severest shocks to our minds, are adopted on the testimony of two manuscripts, or even of one manuscript, against the distinct testimony of all other manuscripts, uncial and cursive. ... The Vatican Codex, sometimes alone, but generally in accord with the

Sinaitic, is responsible for nine-tenths of the most striking innovations in the R.V.” (Frederic Cook, *The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels*, 1882).

Following are a few of these omissions and changes. Lest someone claim that the above situation has changed since the adoption of the “eclectic” system and that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are no longer so slavishly followed, let it be noted that these readings are still found in the Nestle’s and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testaments and the vast majority are found in the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, and the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

### **Matthew**

- 5:22 -- “without a cause” omitted in Aleph and B, thus making Jesus into an evil man because He got angry at times (though never without a cause)
- 5:44 -- “... bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and ... which despitefully use you, and” omitted in Aleph and B
- 6:13 -- “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:13 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph and B
- 12:47 -- “Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee” omitted in Aleph, B
- 19:9 -- “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” omitted in Aleph and B
- 12:47 -- “Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee” omitted in Aleph and B
- 17:21 -- “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 18:11 -- “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost” omitted in Aleph and B
- 19:9 -- “and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” omitted in Aleph
- 23:14 -- “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” omitted in Aleph and B
- 25:13 -- “wherein the Son of Man cometh” omitted in Aleph, B
- 27:34 -- “vinegar” is changed to “wine” in Aleph and B, thus destroying the fulfillment of the prophecy of Psalm 69:21

### **Mark**

- 1:2 -- “the prophets” is changed to “Isaiah the prophet” Aleph, B, thus creating an error because the quotation is from both Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3-5
- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:11 -- “Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city” omitted in Aleph and B



- 9:29 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 9:44 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:45 -- “into the fire that never shall be quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:46 “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:21 -- “take up the cross” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:10 -- “in the name of the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:26 -- “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” omitted in Aleph, B
- 13:14 -- “spoken by Daniel the prophet” omitted in Aleph, B
- 14:68 -- “and the cock crew” omitted in Aleph, B
- 15:28 -- “And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:9-20 -- entire last 12 verses of Mark’s Gospel omitted in Aleph and B

### **Luke**

- 1:28 -- “blessed art thou among women” omitted in Aleph, B
- 2:14 -- “peace, good will toward men” is changed to “peace among men in whom he is well pleased” in Aleph and B
- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted in Aleph, B
- 4:8 -- “and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan” omitted in Aleph and B
- 4:18 -- “to heal the brokenhearted” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:45 -- “treasure of his heart” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:55, 56 -- “and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:2 -- “Our ... which art in heaven” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:2 -- “Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth” omitted in B
- 11:4 -- “deliver us from evil” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:11 -- “bread of any of you ... will he give him a stone? or if he ask” omitted in B
- 22:43-44 -- “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” omitted in B
- 23:17 -- “(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)” verse omitted B
- 23:34 -- “Then said Jesus, Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” omitted in B
- 24:12 -- “Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass” omitted in Aleph and B
- 24:51 -- “and was carried up into heaven” omitted in Aleph

### **John**

- 3:15 -- “should not perish, but” omitted in Aleph, B

- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 5:3-4 -- “waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had” omitted in Aleph, B
- 5:16 -- “and sought to slay him” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:47 -- “on me” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted in Aleph, thus causing Jesus to tell a lie
- 7:53 - 8:11 -- These 12 verses omitted in Aleph and B
- 8:59 -- “going through the midst of them” omitted in Aleph, B
- 16:16 -- “because I go to the Father” omitted in Aleph, B

### **Acts**

- 2:30 -- “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:30 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph and B
- 24:6-8 -- “...and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee...” omitted in Aleph, B
- 24:15 -- “of the dead” omitted in Aleph, B
- 28:29 -- “And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.” verse omitted in Aleph, B

### **Romans**

- 1:16 -- “of Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 1:29 -- “fornication” omitted in Aleph, B
- 8:1 -- “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:28 -- “in righteousness: because a short work” omitted in Aleph, B
- 9:32 -- “of the law” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:15 -- “preach the gospel of peace” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:6 -- “But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” omitted in Aleph, B
- 13:9 -- “Thou shalt not bear false witness” omitted in B
- 14:6 -- “and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it” omitted in Aleph, B
- 14:21 -- “or is offended, or is made weak” omitted in Aleph

### **1 Corinthians**

- 5:7 -- “for us” omitted in Aleph, B
- 6:20 -- “and in your spirit, which are God’s” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:5 -- “fasting” omitted in Aleph, B
- 7:39 -- “by the law” omitted in Aleph, B
- 10:28 -- “for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:24 -- “Take, eat ... broken” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:29 -- “unworthily” omitted in Aleph, B
- 11:29 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
- 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B

**Ephesians**

---- 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 5:30 -- “of his flesh, and of his bones” omitted in Aleph, B

**Philippians**

---- 3:16 -- “by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” omitted in Aleph, B

**Colossians**

---- 1:14 -- “through his blood” omitted in Aleph, B

**Hebrews**

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 2:7 -- “and didst set him over the works of thy hands” omitted in B

---- 3:1 -- “Christ” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:6 -- “firm unto the end” omitted in B

---- 7:21 -- “after the order of Melchisedec” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 8:12 -- “and their iniquities” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 10:9 -- “O God” omitted in Aleph

---- 10:30 -- “saith the Lord” omitted in Aleph

---- 10:34 -- “in heaven” omitted in Aleph

**James**

---- 5:16 -- “faults” changed to “sins” in Aleph, B

**1 Peter**

---- 1:22 -- “through the Spirit” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 2:2 -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” in Aleph, B

---- 4:1 -- “for us” omitted B

---- 4:3 -- “of our life” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 4:14 -- “on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 5:2 -- “taking the oversight thereof” omitted in Aleph, B

**2 Peter**

---- 2:17 -- “for ever” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:10 -- “in the night” omitted in Aleph, B

**Jude**

---- 1:4 -- “God” omitted in Aleph and B

---- 1:25 -- “wise” omitted in Aleph, B

- e. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus contain many readings that denigrate and weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ and thus give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics.

“The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the 3rd and 4th centuries and the copies now held in such high repute among scholars were written in the 4th and 5th centuries. The hostility of these documents to the Trinitarian doctrine impels the mind to the conclusion that their omissions and alterations are not merely the chance errors of transcribers, but the work of a deliberate hand. When we remember the

date of the great Trinitarian contest in the Church, and compare it with the supposed date of these documents, our suspicion becomes much more pronounced. ... THE SO-CALLED OLDEST CODICES AGREE WITH EACH OTHER IN OMITTING A NUMBER OF STRIKING TESTIMONIES TO THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, and they also agree in other omissions relating to Gospel faith and practice” (Robert Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

Consider some examples of this:

Matthew 19:17 -- “Why callest thou me good?” is changed to “Why do you ask me about what is good?” in Aleph and B; when Christ asked, “Why callest thou me good?” He was challenging the young man as to his conception of His Person, which is evident from the statement He makes immediately thereafter: “there is none good but one, that is, God.” Christ was saying, “If I am good, I am God.” Among those born of Adam’s natural seed there is “none that doeth good” (Rom. 3:12)! Christ was good because He was the seed of the woman, the virgin-born, sinless Son of God.

Mark 9:24 -- “Lord” omitted in Aleph and B

Mark 16:9-20 -- These verses are omitted in Aleph and B, thus making Mark’s gospel end with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection and glorious ascension.

Luke 2:33 -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” in Aleph, B

---- 23:42 -- “Lord” is changed to “Jesus” in Aleph and B, thus destroying this powerful reference to Christ’s deity

John 1:18 -- “the only begotten son” changed to “the only begotten God” in Aleph and B. [John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced to the heretic Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ by making a distinction between the Word and the Son of God. In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing Jn. 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son.]

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted in Aleph, B

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted by Aleph and B

---- 6:69 -- “the Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the Holy One of God” in Aleph and B, thus diluting this powerful witness to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God

---- 9:35 -- “Son of God” changed to “Son of man” in Aleph and B, thus weakening another clear testimony to Jesus as the Son of God

---- 9:38 -- “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him” omitted in Aleph, thus removing this powerful and incontrovertible confession of Christ as God

- 10:14 -- “am known of mine” is changed to “mine own know me” in Aleph and B. “...this change destroys the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature’s knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father’s knowledge of the Son, and the Son’s knowledge of the Father” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*).
- Acts 2:30 -- “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” omitted in Aleph and B, thus destroying this clear testimony that Jesus himself fulfills the promise of David as the Christ
- 20:28 -- “church of God” changed to “church of the Lord” in Aleph and B. The Traditional Text says plainly that it was God who died on the cross and shed His blood, whereas the Alexandrian text allows for the heretical view that the Jesus that died on the cross is the Lord but that he is not actually God. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, follow in the footsteps of ancient 2nd century heretics, claiming Jesus as Lord but not as God.
- Romans 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” is changed to “judgment seat of God” in Aleph and B. The “judgment seat of Christ” clearly identifies Jesus Christ with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23)
- 1 Corinthians 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted in Aleph, B
- Ephesians 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted in Aleph, B
- 1 Timothy 3:16 -- “God” is omitted and replaced with “who” in Aleph (codex B does not contain this epistle)
- 1 John 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” in B; every false spirit will “acknowledge Jesus” in a general sense (even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah’s Witnesses), but the spirit of antichrist will not “confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy.
- f. Not only do Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree in thousands of places with the vast majority of other Greek manuscripts, they disagree with one another in as many or more places! There are 3,036 differences between the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus *in the Gospels alone*, not counting minor errors such as spelling (Herman Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*, Vol. II, p. 1). Consider the example of Lord’s prayer: “The five Old Uncials (Aleph A B C D) falsify the Lord’s Prayer as given by St. Luke in no less than forty-five words. But so little do they agree among themselves, that they throw themselves into six different combinations in their departures from the Traditional Text; and yet they are never able to agree among themselves as to one single various reading: while only once are more than two of them observed to stand together, and their grand point of union is no less than an omission of the article. Such is their eccentric tendency, that in respect of thirty-two out of the whole forty-

five words they bear in turn solitary evidence” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 84).

- g. There is therefore clear evidence that Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and D represent a corrupt text that was the product of tampering by theological heretics in the first two centuries after the apostles.

- (1) This is documented by John Burgon, who studied the five most ancient Greek uncials for five and one half years. I do not know of any other scholar who has dedicated this amount of research to these manuscripts. Burgon concluded: “Aleph B D [Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Bezae] are *three of the most scandalously corrupt copies extant: exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts* which are anywhere to be met with: have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of *fabricated readings*, ancient *blunders*, and *intentional perversions of Truth* which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883, p. 16).

- (2) This is also documented by Herman Hoskier in *Codex B and Its Allies: A Study and an Indictment* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914).

- h. Biblical “common sense” informs us that these manuscripts owe their amazing survival solely to the fact that they are so corrupt. John Burgon, who calls B and Aleph “TWO FALSE WITNESSES,” observes: “We suspect that these two Manuscripts are indebted for their preservation, *SOLELY TO THEIR ASCERTAINED EVIL CHARACTER*; which has occasioned that the one eventually found its way, four centuries ago, to a forgotten shelf in the Vatican library: while the other, after exercising the ingenuity of several generations of critical Correctors, eventually (viz. in A.D. 1844) got deposited in the waste-paper basket of the Convent at the foot of Mount Sinai. Had B and Aleph been copies of average purity, they must long since have shared the inevitable fate of books which are freely *used* and highly prized; namely, they would have fallen into decadence and disappeared from sight” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 319; see also pp. 30-31). If these two witnesses were put on a witness stand in a court of law, they would be rejected. Not only do they disagree together against the vast majority of other witnesses, but they also disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the majority!

## 7. Modern textual criticism has also found support for its Egyptian text in **THE PAPYRI**.

- a. Some basic introductory facts about the papyri:

- (1) The papyri New Testament manuscripts are so called because they are written on papyrus. The letters are written in uncial or all caps.

- (2) 116 papyrus manuscripts are listed in the 4th edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (2001 printing).
- (3) The papyri encompass the oldest extant New Testament manuscripts. Four of papyrus fragments are dated to the 2nd century and roughly 40 are dated to the 3rd.
- (4) Not all of the papyri are so old. Thirty-eight of them date from the 5th to the 8th centuries.
- (5) The papyri are fragmentary and give only slight evidence for the New Testament books.
  - (a) There are no papyrus manuscripts extant for 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy.
  - (b) There is only one fragmentary papyrus for 2 John and 3 John.
  - (c) There are only two fragmentary papyri for the following books: 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, 2 Peter, 1 John.
  - (d) There are only three fragmentary papyri for the following: Mark, Ephesians, Philippians, 1 Peter, Jude.
  - (e) There are more than 10 fragmentary papyri for only three books: Matthew (18), John (22), and Acts (13).
  - (f) Eldon Epp observes: “Yet, most of the NT papyri are extremely fragmentary, and what net gain we have in actual quantity of text comes almost entirely from seven papyri (p45, p46, p47, p66, p72, p74, and p75)” (Epp. “The Twentieth Century Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 95). (P74 dates to the seventh century.)
- (6) There are two major collections of New Testament papyri. It is possible that the two collections came from the same place, as a fragment of Bodmer P66 (from chapter 19 of John) has been found among the Chester Beatty Papyri (Hills, p. 130).
  - (a) The Chester Beatty Collection is housed in the Beatty Museum in Dublin. These manuscripts were found in a pot on the east bank of the Nile south of Cairo (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 130). Nothing more is known about the history of these ancient manuscripts. The manuscripts were published in 1933-37.
  - (b) The Bodmer Collection of manuscripts was published in 1956-62. The more than 50 papyrus documents belonging to the Bodmer Library were purchased by M. Martin Bodmer in Geneva in 1954 from E.N. Adler of London (Hills,

pp. 129, 130). Bodmer is a “Genevan bibliophile and humanist” and the founder of the Bodmer Library of World Literature at Cologne, a suburb of Geneva (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 39).

b. Some important facts about the papyri relating to textual criticism:

(1) The papyri owe their survival to the fact that they were located in Egypt, and it is not surprising, therefore, that they generally reflect an Egyptian or Alexandrian text. “Our oldest extant manuscripts are the papyri. They are the remains of a kind of text which did not live very long, and rather than spread widely among God’s people suffered an early death and burial in the sands of Egypt. ... As with Aleph and B, the papyri were soon discarded by early believers, with few copies made” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 16, 17). After examining a number of heretical readings in early Egyptian manuscripts, Edward Hills concludes: “Thus we see that it is unwise in present day translators to base the texts of their modern versions on recent papyrus discoveries or on B and Aleph. For all these documents come from Egypt, and Egypt during the early Christian centuries was a land in which heresies were rampant. So much was this so that, as Bauer (1934) and van Unnik (1958) have pointed out, later Egyptian Christians seem to have been ashamed of the heretical past of their country and to have drawn a veil of silence across it. This seems to be why so little is known of the history of early Egyptian Christianity. In view, therefore, of the heretical character of the early Egyptian Church, it is not surprising that the papyri, B, Aleph, and other manuscripts which hail from Egypt are liberally sprinkled with heretical readings” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 1984, p. 134).

(2) The papyri exhibit evident signs of corruption.

#### P45

- (a) This papyrus is part of the Chester Beatty collection and contains portions of the four Gospels and Acts. It is dated c. 225 A.D.
- (b) It contains at least 45 nonsense readings caused by the extreme carelessness and ineptness of the scribe, who “omits adverbs, adjectives, nouns, participles, verbs, and personal pronouns--without any compensating habit of addition. He frequently omits phrases and clauses. He shortens the text in at least fifty places in singular readings alone” (Ernest Colwell, quoted by Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*). “Since p45 contains many deliberate alterations it can only be called a ‘copy’ with certain reservations” (Pickering).



- (c) In a collation of the mere 70 verses in the Gospel of John that overlap between p45 and p66, the p66 disagrees with the p45 in 73 places *apart from the many obvious scribal mistakes!*

#### P46

- (a) This papyrus is part of the Chester Beatty collection and contains portions of most of the Pauline Epistles. It is dated c. 225 A.D.
- (b) It “abounds with scribal blunders, omissions, and also additions” (Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 212).
- (c) It also contains evidence of gnostic corruption. For example, it follows Aleph and B in repeatedly separating “Jesus” from “Christ” (i.e., Mat. 9:29; 12:25; 13:51; 14:14; 22:22, 25, 27; 15:30; 16:20; John 6:14; Acts 3:26; 9:29; 19:10; Rom. 16:18; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:28; 1 Peter 5:10, 14). “The separation of ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ’ occurs far too often to look for any cause other than deliberate editing in certain N.T. manuscripts. That there was a strong movement in the early centuries which could result in such a systematic editing, there can be no doubt! The foremost error regarding the Person of Christ, is of course, to deny His true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as ‘Adoptionism’ or ‘Spirit Christology.’ Here, Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was ‘adopted’ by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the ‘Christ-Spirit’ at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at His baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separate personages. ... it is the small group of Alexandrian manuscripts which consistently disassociate ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ.’ And, along with Aleph and B, Papyri 46 follows the same trend” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 5, 6).
- (d) Even more damning is 1 Cor. 15:47, which reads in p46, “...the second man is THE SPIRIT from heaven” instead of “the LORD from heaven,” thus exposing the “dark secret” that p46 is, without a doubt, a corrupt manuscript that was modified to fit heretical views that Christ was a spirit separate from the man Jesus.

#### P66

- (a) This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of the Gospels of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.
- (b) “It is one of the worst copies we have. It has an average of roughly two mistakes per verse--many being obvious mistakes, stupid mistakes, nonsensical mistakes. From the pattern of mistakes it is clear that the scribe copied syllable by syllable. I have no qualms in affirming that the person who

produced p66 did not know Greek. Had he understood the text he would not have made the number and sort of mistakes that he did” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 5). P66 contains almost 900 false readings unique to itself, at least 215 of which are nonsensical, meaning they were created by the extreme carelessness and ignorance of the scribe. And that is in a fragment containing not even the entire Gospel of John!

- (c) It also gives evidence of heretical tampering. P66 has “only begotten God” in John 1:18, for example. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Greek manuscripts, could be traced back to the heretic named Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216). “The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (Aeons)” (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74). In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing John 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son and God.
- (d) P66 has “Christ, the Holy One of God” in John 6:69, thus destroying this powerful testimony that Jesus is the very Christ, the Son of God.
- (e) P66 omits “who is in heaven” in John 3:13, thus removing this powerful witness to Christ’s omnipresence.

## P72

- (a) This manuscript was acquired by Bodmer and dates to the third century. It contains the epistle of Jude and 1 and 2 Peter.
- (b) It also contains various apocryphal writings including the Nativity of Mary, fictional correspondence of Paul to the Corinthians, and the eleventh Ode of Solomon.

## P75

- (a) This papyrus, belonging to the Bodmer collection, contains portions of Luke and John. It is dated c. 200 A.D.
- (b) It was copied letter-by-letter rather than word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase, indicating that the scribe did not even know the Greek language and therefore had no understanding of what he was writing. P75 contains about 400 singular readings unique to itself, at least 65 of which are nonsensical, created by the extreme carelessness and ignorance of the scribe. (See Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 6).

- (c) P75 contains much evidence of heretical corruption. It has “only begotten God” in John 1:18; “the Holy One of God” in John 6:69; replaces “Lord” with “Jesus” in Luke 23:42; omits “who is in heaven” in John 3:13. In John 10:7, p75 reads, “I am the shepherd of the sheep,” instead of, “I am the door of the sheep.” In Luke 16:19, p75 says the rich man’s name was Neves. In John 8:57, p75 reads, “Hath Abraham seen thee?” instead of “Hast thou seen Abraham?” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 129).
- (3) The extensive study done by Harry Sturz demonstrates that the papyri, though generally siding with the Alexandrian text, often support the Traditional Text. “Harry A. Sturz in his book *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact Sturz demonstrates papyri support for a total of 839 readings which in varying degrees would be classed as ‘distinctly Byzantine.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri comes from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. [Most of] the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).
- (4) To allow newly discovered manuscripts to overthrow the testimony of the majority of manuscripts that God’s people have used through the centuries flies in the face of divine preservation. Only nine papyri were known in the year 1900 and it was not until the 1930s, with the publication of the Chester Beatty papyri, that the papyri came under serious consideration. Thus, for all practical purposes, the papyri were hidden away from the eyes of God’s people for most of the church age. “... it is evident that as Bible-believing Christians we cannot consistently maintain that there are true readings of the New Testament text which have been hiding in papyri for ages, enclosed in pots, waiting for the light of day, and just now discovered. ... Thank God that He has not preserved the New Testament text in this secret way but publicly in the usage of His Church and in the Traditional Text...” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 130).
- (5) To allow the papyri to overthrow the testimony of the centuries would be to throw the text of Scripture into perpetual doubt. “If we thought this, our faith

would be always wavering. We could never be sure that a [manuscript] dealer would not soon appear with something new from somewhere” (Hills, p. 130).

### **Conclusion to the section “What Is Modern Textual Criticism?”**

1. Textual criticism is the application of modern linguistic theories to the recovery of ancient documents.
2. Modern textual criticism was devised largely by men who treated the Bible like any other book and who either did not believe in the doctrine of Bible preservation or refused to predicate their textual theories on this doctrine.
3. Modern textual criticism claims that the Traditional Greek Text, the Reformation Text, is corrupt and has a special distaste for it.
4. The Greek text produced by modern textual criticism is much shorter than the Received Text New Testament.
5. Modern textual criticism was not popular until the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek N.T. in 1881.
6. Modern textual criticism favors a few Greek uncials (e.g. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) and a small number of other manuscripts of similar character over the vast majority of the 5,471 Greek manuscripts and lectionaries extant.
7. Vaticanus (B) or Sinaiticus (Aleph), either individually or together, are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions.
8. These manuscripts originated in Egypt, a hotbed of theological heresy.
9. These manuscripts bear evidence of being corrupt above all other Greek uncials or minuscules.
10. The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus contain many readings that denigrate and weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ and thus give evidence that they are representatives of manuscripts that were corrupted by heretics.
11. Not only do Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree in thousands of places with the vast majority of other Greek manuscripts, they disagree with one another in as many or more places.
12. The Egyptian Papyri also show evident signs of heretical corruption.

### **WHY WE REJECT MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

#### **Section Summary**

1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.
2. We reject modern textual criticism because its theories are strange and unscriptural.
3. We reject modern textual criticism because its rules are unsettled and constantly changing, and also because the rules are applied in different ways by individual critics.
4. We further reject modern textual criticism because its fruit has been increasing uncertainty and skepticism, a weakening of the authority of Scripture, and the promotion of the ecumenical movement.

## **1. We reject modern textual criticism because its goal is unscriptural.**

a. The goal of modern textual criticism stated:

- (1) Constantine Tischendorf stated the goal of modern textual criticism as “the struggle to REGAIN the original form of the New Testament” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). This implies, of course, that the original form of the New Testament had been lost prior to the 19th century when Tischendorf lived.
- (2) The very title of Bruce Metzger’s popular book -- *The New Testament’s Transmission, CORRUPTION, AND RESTORATION* -- describes modern textual criticism’s principle that the Scriptures *were not* divinely preserved, because they must allegedly be recovered after having been corrupted for 1,500 years.

Thus, modern textual criticism is built upon the premise that the original text of the New Testament needed to be restored in the 19th century.

b. The error of this goal: If this goal is true, then divine preservation is false. In fact, most standard works on textual criticism do not even mention divine preservation. Following are a few examples:

*The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Introduction) by Westcott and Hort (1881)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Kirsopp Lake (1900, 1949)

*Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* by Eberhard Nestle (1901)

*The Canon and Text of the New Testament* by Casper Rene Gregory (1907)

*The Text and Canon of the New Testament* by Alexander Souter (1912)

*The Text of the Greek Bible* by F.G. Kenyon (1936, 1975)

*New Testament Manuscript Studies* by Parvis and Wikgren (1950)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Bruce Metzger (1968)

*The Text of the New Testament* by Kurt and Barbara Aland (1981)

## **2. We reject modern textual criticism because its theories are strange and unscriptural.**

### **Introductory thoughts:**

a. The principles of modern textual criticism have been in a state of flux for 200 years, and textual critics pick and choose among these principles as it suits their fancy.

“Driving through Birmingham, England, I passed an ‘establishment’ called ‘The Artful Dodger’. And, frankly, there is not a better way to describe Textual Criticism.

It shifts, it turns, it establishes, it overturns, it rewrites, it restates, it examines, it ignores, etc.” --Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, p. 9

- b. Therefore, while not all of the following principles are held by any one textual critic, these are standard principles that have been promoted by prominent textual critics at various stages in its history.

### **Some of the chief principles of modern textual criticism examined:**

Note: The theories of modern textual criticism are examined more thoroughly in *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

- a. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: In matters of textual criticism the Bible is to be treated like any other ancient book. No special consideration is to be made concerning its claims of inspiration and preservation. “The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).

*COMMENT*: The Bible cannot be treated like any other book, because it alone has the divine and supernatural element, which holds true not only for its origin but also for its history. Other books were not written by divine inspiration or preserved by divine providence. Other books are not hated by the devil and attacked by false teachers.

- b. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: Early Christians were not careful about the text of the New Testament. See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.
- c. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: Hort devotes many pages to his theory of Genealogy and Text Families. “All trustworthy restoration of corrupted texts is grounded on the study of their history” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction and Appendix, 1881). Hort claimed that there are four major families of texts: Syrian (Traditional or Byzantine), Western (represented by Codex D), Alexandrian (allegedly an attempt to correct the Western text to the Neutral), and Neutral (allegedly represented by the Vaticanus manuscript and, to a lesser degree, the Sinaiticus). By this means Hort was able to discount the vast majority of extant manuscripts that witness to the Traditional Text and to exalt the tiny number of manuscripts that witness to their favored Egyptian Text.

COMMENT:

- (1) There is no Neutral Text. Modern textual critics since Hort have dropped the neutral category and put Vaticanus and Sinaiticus into the Alexandrian family.
- (2) There is no Western text. Jack Moorman observes: “Codex ‘D’ Bezae is claimed to be the primary representative of this textual family, but -- ‘What we have called the D-text type, indeed, is not so much a text as a congeries of various readings, not descending from any one archetype ... No one MS can be taken as even approximately representing the D-text’ (Kenyon). Colwell observes that the Nestle text (25th edition) denies the existence of the Western text as an identifiable group, saying it is ‘a denial with which I agree.’ Speaking of von Soden’s classification of the Western text, Metzger says, ‘so diverse are the textual phenomena that von Soden was compelled to posit seventeen subgroups.’ And Klijn, speaking of a pure or original western text affirms that ‘such a text did not exist.’” The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament has done away with a symbol for a Western text. The editors of the 4th edition of the UBS Greek N.T. refer to “the so-called Western text” (UBS4, Introduction, p. 5). Kurt and Barbara Aland say, “...the theory of a special ‘Western’ type of the text is improbable from the outset, and even its most passionate proponents never refer to it as ‘Western’ without using quotation marks” (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 68, 69).
- (3) Other textual families proposed since Hort have also been discredited. Note this testimony by Kurt and Barbara Aland: “Whatever else may be proposed, especially with reference to the so-called Western, Caesarean, and Jerusalem text types, is theoretical, based on dubious foundations and often built completely in the clouds” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 67). It is interesting that the Alands use the same description of these alleged texts (“built completely in the clouds”) as John Burgon did of Westcott and Hort’s theories in the 19th century. In 1964, Kurt Aland said: “These [Alexandrian and Antiochian] are, it seems to me, the only text-types which may be regarded as certain and that only since the fourth century. Everything else is extremely doubtful” (Aland, cited by Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 37).
- (4) There is not even a unified Alexandrian text. Vaticanus and Sinaiticus disagree with one another as much as they disagree with the Traditional Text, more than 3,000 places in the Gospels alone, not counting spelling. John Burgon observed, “It is in fact easier to find two consecutive verses in which these two MSS differ, than two consecutive verses in which they entirely agree.” The papyrus manuscripts, which are also lumped into the Alexandrian category by textual critics, actually have the same kind of mixed text. They disagree with Vaticanus

and Sinaiticus and with one another as much as they disagree with the Traditional Text. There is no unified Alexandrian testimony, just a mass of conflict and confusion. Burgon called it “agreement in disunity.” Wilbur Pickering gives irrefutable evidence of this in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*.

- (5) In reality, the record testifies of only two textual families that have any significant witness through the church age, and that is the Byzantine Greek and the Latin vulgate. I believe the Latin vulgate, for the most part, represents a slight corruption of the Greek Byzantine.
  - (a) The Byzantine Greek text demonstrates a true unity. It is represented by thousands of manuscripts and lectionaries that differ from one another only in small ways. This is admitted by textual critics, and it has been demonstrated that these manuscripts were not copied from one another and that they are not the product of any sort of official or unofficial recension. “With some 85% or more of the 5,000 extant MSS falling into the category of the Received Text, there is in fact only one textual family, the Received. All that remains is so contradictory, so confused, so mixed, that not by the furthest stretch of imagination can they be considered several families of MSS. Rather than face squarely this preponderance of support for the TR, naturalistic scholars with their ingrained bias against that text have found it convenient to talk of three or four families, as if all were basically equals. This was one of the main pillars in the Westcott and Hort theory which enabled them to Construct a new Greek Testament on the fewest possible MSS” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*).
  - (b) The Latin “vulgate” also demonstrates a unity that varies somewhat from the Byzantine in a consistent manner. For example, “God” is typically omitted from 1 Timothy 3:16 in the Latin manuscripts and in those versions that were translated from the Latin.
- (6) As for tracing the lineage or geneology of manuscripts, it is impossible to do. We simply do not know the genealogy of the manuscripts.
  - (a) This was stated by John Burgon: “High time, however, is it to declare that, in strictness, *all this talk about genealogical evidence, when applied to manuscripts is MOONSHINE*. The expression is metaphorical, and assumes that it has fared with MSS. as it fares with the successive generations of a family; and so, to a remarkable extent, no doubt, it has. But then, it happens, unfortunately, *that we are unacquainted with one single instance of a known ms. copied from another known ms. AND PERFORCE ALL TALK ABOUT GENEALOGICAL EVIDENCE, WHERE NO SINGLE STEP IN THE DESCENT CAN BE PRODUCED, IN OTHER WORDS, WHERE NO*



*GENEALOGICAL EVIDENCE EXISTS, IS ABSURD.* The living inhabitants of a village, congregated in the churchyard where the bodies of their forgotten progenitors for 1000 years repose without memorials of any kind, is a faint image of the relation which subsists between extant copies of the Gospels and the sources from which they were derived. That, in either case, there has been repeated mixture is undeniable. But since the parish-register is lost, and not a vestige of tradition survives, it is idle to pretend to argue on that part of the subject. It may be reasonably assumed, however, that those fifty yeomen, bearing as many Saxon surnames, indicate as many remote ancestors of some sort. That they represent as many families is at least a fact. Further we cannot go. But the illustration is misleading because inadequate. Assemble rather an Englishman, an Irishman, a Scot, a Frenchman, a German, a Spaniard, a Russian, Pole, an Hungarian, an Italian, a Greek, a Turk. From Noah these twelve are all confessedly descended. But if they are silent, and you know nothing whatever about their antecedents, your remarks about their respective ‘genealogies’ must needs prove as barren as Dr. Hort’s about the ‘genealogies’ of copies of Scripture. *‘The factor of Genealogy,’ in short, in this discussion, represents a mere phantom of the brain. It is the name of an imagination, not a fact*” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).

- (b) This is admitted by textual critics. “... a stemma is practically problematic as it always seems to end up in two strands, among which it is impossible to choose the correct reading when they differ from each other” (J. Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 14, f 15). “... establishing the exclusive derivation of one manuscript from another is not merely difficult but impossible” (M.D. Reeve, “Eliminatio codicum descriptorum: A Methodological Problem,” *Editing Greek and Latin Texts*, ed. J.N. Grant, 1989, p. 1). “... a stemma can sometimes tell us which is the reading best attested, never which is best” (J. Willis, “Latin Textual Criticism,” *Illinois Studies in Language and Literature* 61, 1972, p. 32).

- d. *Modern textual criticism’s theory:* The primary basis for the “recovery” of the Greek text should be firstly, Vaticanus, and secondarily Sinaiticus. “B [Vaticanus] far exceeds all other documents in neutrality of text. ... It is our belief (1) that the readings of Aleph B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] should be accepted as the true readings until strong internal evidence is found to the contrary, and (2) that no readings of Aleph B can safely be rejected absolutely, though it is sometimes right to place them only on an alternative footing, especially where they receive no support from the Versions or the Fathers. ... The fullest comparison does but increase the conviction that their preeminent relative purity is likewise approximately absolute, a true approximate reproduction of the text of the autographs” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, pp. 171, 225, 276).

Before we analyze this theory, we should note that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are still given priority by modern textual critics. The editors of the New International Version admit that they prefer the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts: "...in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the great Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century AD, are to be preferred over those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR [Received Text]" (Ronald Youngblood, *The Making of a Contemporary Translation*, p. 152). Kurt and Barbara Aland call the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus "the two important uncials" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 292). They call Vaticanus "by far the most significant of the uncials" (*Ibid.*, p. 109). When the new versions say a certain word or verse is not found in the "oldest and best manuscripts," they are referring primarily to Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, together with a handful of other manuscripts, largely fragmentary, that exhibit similar Egyptian readings.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Westcott and Hort preferred the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts even though they are joined by only a handful of other Egyptian manuscripts in their witness against the thousands of other extant Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, and versions.
- (2) They ignored the corrupt nature of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. After a careful examination of these manuscripts, textual scholar John Burgon concluded that they "exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with..." and they are "the most scandalously corrupt copies extant." We have given some of the evidence for this conclusion.
- (3) In following Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, modern textual critics are ignoring divine preservation. If this theory is true and if the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and the handful of Egyptian manuscripts represent the apostolic text, it means that the apostolic New Testament text was discarded by the churches for 1,500 years.
- (4) Modern textual critics do not pay enough attention to the location of these manuscripts, coming, as they do, from Egypt, that hotbed of heresy. The most reasonable position is to consider the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus corrupt manuscripts that were created in the midst of heresy and rightly rejected by the churches.
- (5) Modern textual critics have no fear of borrowing from Rome. They make nothing of the fact that Rome brought the Vaticanus to light during the Reformation in an attempt to confuse the biblical issue and to bring disrepute to the Protestant Bibles. I am convinced that a wiser, more Scriptural position is

that of Ian Paisley: “I WILL OPPOSE B THE VATICAN MS FIRST, FOREMOST, ALTOGETHER, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS THE VATICAN MS, BECAUSE I HAVE TO RECEIVE IT FROM ROME, BECAUSE I WILL HAVE NO BIBLE FROM ROME, NO HELP FROM ROME AND NO COMPLICITY WITH ROME; BECAUSE I BELIEVE ROME TO BE AN APOSTATE. A worshipper of Bread for God; a remover of the sovereign mediatorship of Christ; a destroyer of the true gospel, she teaches a system which, if any man believes or follows as she teaches it, he will infallibly be lost--he must be. ... I will not take my Bible--not the bulk of it--from her apostate, foul deceitful cruel hands, ‘*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*’--I fear the Latins bearing presents in their hands” (Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*, p. 66).

- e. Modern textual criticism’s theory: The Received Text is the product of an official ecclesiastical revision. “The Syrian Text must in fact be the result of a ‘Recension’ ... performed deliberately by Editors, and not merely by Scribes. ... It was probably initiated by the distracting and inconvenient currency of at least three conflicting Texts in the same region. ... Each Text may perhaps have found a Patron in some leading personage or see, and thus have seemed to call for a conciliation of rival claims. ... The growing diversity and confusion of Greek Texts led to an authoritative Revision at Antioch:--which (2) was then taken as a standard for a similar authoritative Revision of the Syriac text:--and (3) was itself at a later time subjected to a second authoritative Revision. ... [the final process having been] apparently completed by 350 or thereabouts” (Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, pp. 133, 134, 137).

“Nearly all text critics assume that between 250 and 350 A.D. there was a revision of the Greek text which produced the traditional text” (A.H. McNeile, *An Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, p. 428).

“Whereas the original theory of Westcott and Hort, that Lucian was responsible for the origin of this text was objected to later in the century, Kurt Aland recently revived the theory again” (Jacobus Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 17).

#### COMMENT:

- (1) The theory of recension is how Westcott and Hort accounted for the dominance of the Received Text. “The theories of Westcott and Hort very largely shaped the text adopted by the 1881 Revisers and influenced practically every subsequent translation on both sides of the Atlantic. Their problem was how to account for the dominance of the ‘Majority Text’ from the 4th century onwards. Codex B and Codex Aleph were both written in the 4th century, and if they present the

text in its purest form, how was it that this remained unrecognised until the middle of the nineteenth century? ... Their theory was that there must have been some kind of deliberate but misguided editorial revision of the Greek Text, probably in Syria, possibly in Antioch, perhaps during the latter part of the 4th century ... According to this theory, this edited text was wrongly permitted to eclipse the 'pure' text exhibited by B and Aleph--until these documents were rehabilitated in the nineteenth century" (Terrance Brown, *What Is Wrong with the Modern Versions of the Holy Scriptures?* Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England, Article No. 41).

- (2) There is no historical evidence that the Traditional Text was produced by a Recension. "The weakness of Westcott and Hort's theory of a 4th century Syrian revision which resulted in the substitution of the majority text for the B Aleph text is that such a revision is unknown to history. The whole scheme rests upon a supposition for which there is no historical evidence, and consists largely in making dogmatic assertions based upon uncertainties" (Terence Brown, *What Is Wrong with the Modern Versions of the Holy Scriptures?* Trinitarian Bible Society, Article No. 41). John Burgon, who knew as much about the history of the Bible text as any man in the last two centuries, observed: "They assume everything. They prove nothing. ... the utter absence of one particle of evidence, traditional or otherwise, that it ever did take place, must be held to be fatal to the hypothesis that it did. It is simply incredible that an incident of such magnitude and interest would leave no trace of itself in history" (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 264, 293). Burgon called Hort's theory "an excursion into cloud-land; a dream, and nothing more" and "mere moonshine." Frederic Cook was just as blunt: "The supposition [of a Lucian Recension] is a manifest absurdity" (*The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels Considered*, 1882, p. 202).
- (3) Hort called the Traditional Text *Syrian* or *Antiochian* because it was the predominant text of that area in the 4th century, which is actually a loud statement in favor of its apostolic authenticity. Hort said, "The fundamental Text of late extant Greek MSS. generally is beyond all question identical with the dominant Antiochian or Graeco-Syrian Text of the second half of the fourth century" (*The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction, p. 92). It is unreasonable to think that the church at Antioch would look to any other realm in textual matters or would have countenanced any sort of "recension" that "conflated" three competing texts. In fact, it is unreasonable to believe that it would have allowed the cherished apostolic text to become corrupted in a mere three centuries. "Why should the great apostolic and mission-minded church at Antioch send to Alexandria or any other center for Scripture copies by which to correct her own? The Church at Antioch, conscious of her heritage and the excellence of her own first copies of the Scriptures, would have little reason to

consider the resources of others superior. .... Antioch may well have been the prime source of the earliest copies of most of the New Testament Scriptures for newly established churches. ... It might appear more logical to reason that if Antioch would send anywhere for copies of New Testament Scriptures in order to purify its own text, it would most likely send to Ephesus, Galatia, Colosse, Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, and Rome in order to acquire more perfect copies of the epistles originally sent to these locales. Another reason for questioning Antioch's dependence upon manuscripts whose provenance was Alexandria is the difference of attitude toward Scripture and its interpretation which existed between the theological schools of the two cities. Beginning as early as Theophilus (died before 188) who, as an advocate of the literal interpretation of Scripture, is considered a forerunner of the 'School of Antioch,' Antioch developed a school of literal interpretation which was almost diametrically opposed to the 'School of Alexandria' with its principles of allegorical interpretation. This makes it difficult to believe that Antioch would look to Alexandria for help in either the earliest period or later when the differences between the schools became even more marked" (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 104, 105, 106).

- (4) If Hort's theory of a formal ecclesiastical recension were true, it would mean that the most influential church leaders of the 3rd and 4th centuries rejected the Egyptian text as corrupt, which would be a powerful testimony IN FAVOR OF the Traditional Text! John Burgon observed this in his masterpiece *The Revision Revised*, and it is a fact that devastates the modern textual criticism's theory of recension. Consider the following very carefully. "Somewhere between A.D. 250 and 350, therefore,--('it is impossible to say with confidence' [Hort, p. 137] what was the actual date, but these Editors evidently incline to the latter half of the IIIrd century, i.e. *circa* A.D. 275);--we are to believe that the Ecclesiastical heads of the four great Patriarchates of Eastern Christendom,--Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople,--had become so troubled at witnessing the prevalence of depraved copies of Holy Scripture in their respective churches, that they resolved by common consent on achieving an authoritative Revision which should henceforth become the standard Text of all the Patriarchates of the East. ... The inference is at least inevitable that men in high place at that time deemed themselves competent to grapple with the problem. Enough was familiarly known about the character and the sources of these corrupt texts to make it certain that they would be recognizable when produced; and that, when condemned by authority, they would no longer be propagated, and in the end would cease to molest the Church. This much, at all events, is legitimately to be inferred from the hypothesis. Behold then from every principal Diocese of ancient Christendom, and in the Church's palmy days, the most famous of the ante-Nicene Fathers repair to Antioch. They go up by authority, and are attended by skilled Ecclesiastics of the highest theological attainment. Bearers are they

perforce of a vast number of Copies of the Scriptures, and (by the hypothesis) *the latest possible dates* of any of these Copies must range between A.D. 250 and 350. But the Delegates of so many ancient Sees will have been supremely careful, before starting on so important and solemn an errand, to make diligent search for the oldest copies anywhere discoverable: and when they reach the scene of their deliberations, we may be certain that they are able to appeal to not a few codices *written within a hundred years of the date of the inspired Autographs* themselves. Copies of the Scripture authenticated as having belonged to the most famous of their predecessors,--and held by them in high repute for the presumed purity of their Texts,--will have been stowed away--for purposes of comparison and avoidance--specimens of those dreaded Texts whose existence has been the sole reason why (by the hypothesis) this extraordinary concourse of learned Ecclesiastics has taken place. After solemnly invoking the Divine blessing, these men address themselves assiduously to their task; and (by the hypothesis) they proceed to condemn every codex which exhibits a ‘strictly Western,’ or a ‘strictly Alexandrian,’ or a ‘strictly Neutral’ type. In plain English, if codices B, Aleph, and D had been before them, they would have unceremoniously rejected all three... When, therefore, at the end of a thousand and half a thousand years, Dr. Hort ... proposes to reverse the deliberate sentence of Antiquity,--his position strikes us as bordering on the ludicrous. ... Yes, we repeat it,--Dr. Hort is in direct antagonism with the Fathers of the IIIrd and the IVth Century. HIS OWN FANTASTIC HYPOTHESIS OF A ‘SYRIAN’ TEXT,--the solemn expression of the collective wisdom and deliberate judgment of the Fathers of the Nicene Age (A.D. 250--A.D. 350),--is the best answer which can by possibility be invented to his own pages,--IS, IN OUR ACCOUNT, THE ONE SUFFICIENT AND CONCLUSIVE REFUTATION OF HIS OWN TEXT. ... The essential thing to be borne in mind is that, according to Dr. Hort,--*on two distinct occasions between A.D. 250 and 350*--the whole Eastern Church, meeting by representation in her palmiest days, deliberately put forth that Traditional Text of the N.T. with which we at this day are chiefly familiar. That this is indeed his view of the matter there can at least be no doubt. ... Be it so. It follows that the text exhibited by such codices as B and Aleph *was deliberately condemned* by the assembled piety, learning, and judgment of the four great Patriarchates of Eastern Christendom. At a period when there existed *nothing more modern* than Codices B and Aleph,--nothing so modern as A and C,--all specimens of the former class were rejected, while such codices as bore a general resemblance to A were by common consent pointed out as deserving of confidence and *recommended for repeated transcription*” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 278-287).

*NOTE:* Burgon, being an Anglican, reads his ecclesiology back into the historical record. He speaks, for example, of the “Eastern church.” Biblically speaking, there is no such thing; there is no “church” that encompasses a realm

of territory containing many assemblies. The New Testament is very precise in its use of the term *ecclesia* or *church*. When it is used for a group of churches residing in a territory, such as those in Judea or Galatia or Asia, it always uses the term in the plural, “the churchES of Judea,” “the churchES of Galatia,” and “the churchES of Asia.” The New Testament term “bishop” is synonymous with “elder” and “pastor.” All three terms describe the same humble office in the local church; these terms never refer to an ecclesiological position that is set up over a plurality of assemblies or a territory. Burgon further uses terminology (“four great Patriarchates”) to describe churches in the 3rd century that would more typically have applied to a later time. While many churches were apostatizing from the apostolic pattern by that date and were forming “bishoprics” and “patriarchates,” a great many were not.

That being said, it is evident that Burgon turned Hort’s Syrian recension theory on its head and demonstrated that if such a thing actually occurred it would provide devastating evidence AGAINST Hort’s Alexandrian text. If churches actually met together in the 3rd or 4th centuries to revise the New Testament text so as to purge away any impurities that had crept in, they would surely have had the resources and understanding to accomplish such a task. They lived only a short time from the passing of the apostles. They would have had the testimony of the apostolic churches themselves, because they still existed. They would have had the testimony of countless treasured manuscripts that have long since disappeared from the record. They would have had an intimate knowledge of the devices of heretics that had operated in the previous century or two. For scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries to claim that they are better able, with the pathetically slim manuscript evidence that has survived from those earliest centuries, to discern the apostolic text than the majority of churches in the 3rd and 4th centuries is simply ridiculous.

- (5) Some contemporary textual critics have abandoned the idea that the Received Text was created through one historical revision, replacing this with the theory that it was created over a long process. But whereas the first idea has no historical evidence, the second is absurd upon its very face. Zane Hodges wisely observes: “No one has yet explained how a long, slow process spread out over many centuries as well as over a wide geographical area, and involving a multitude of copyists, who often knew nothing of the state of the text outside of their own monasteries or scriptoria, could achieve this widespread uniformity out of the diversity presented by the earlier [Western and Alexandrian] forms of text ... An unguided process achieving relative stability and uniformity in the diversified textual, historical, and cultural circumstances in which the New Testament was copied, imposes impossible strains on our imagination” (Hodges, “The Implications of Statistical Probability for the History of the Text,”

Appendix C in Wilbur N. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 edition, p. 168). Indeed.

- (6) If modern textual criticism's principle of a Recension were true, it would destroy the doctrine of Bible preservation in any conceivably practical sense, because it would mean that the apostolic text was, for all practical purposes, discarded for 15 centuries!
- (7) If modern textual criticism's principle of a recension is rejected, the entire superstructure falls to the ground. Why do the modern textual critics reject the Traditional or Majority Text out of hand and give it no serious consideration? Why, for example, can Kurt and Barbara Aland say of a "great many" of the uncials that "since they offer nothing more than a Byzantine text ... they are in consequence quite irrelevant for textual criticism" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 104)? They do so on the ground that this text was allegedly created in the 4th century by means of a recension, thus allowing them to treat the thousands of Traditional text manuscripts merely as so many copies of one alleged and, in their eyes, inauthentic revision. Without such a theory, they have no reason to despise the witness of the majority of manuscripts. "But it is clear that with this hypothesis of a 'Syrian' text,--the immediate source and actual prototype of the commonly received Text of the N.T.,--*stands or falls their entire Textual theory*. Reject it, and the entire fabric is observed to collapse, and subside into a shapeless ruin" (Burton, *The Revision Revised*, p. 294).
- f. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The Traditional Text did not exist prior to the middle of the third century*. "Before the middle of the third century, at the very earliest, we have no historical signs of the existence of readings, conflate or other, that are marked as distinctively Syrian by the want of attestation from groups of documents which have preserved the other ancient forms of text" (quoted from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). Frederic Kenyon called this the "corner-stone" of Hort's theory, "that readings characteristic of the Received Text are never found in the quotations of Christian writers prior to about A.D. 350" (Kenyon, *Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, London: Oxford University Press, 1933, pp. 7-8). The reason that this was the cornerstone of Hort's theory was that he believed it offered irrefutable evidence that the Traditional Text was created by a revision in the fourth century, since (so he said) it does not appear in the manuscript record prior to that.

*COMMENT:* This is untrue, as the following evidence demonstrates.

- (1) Consider some testimonies of authorities to the existence of the Traditional Text prior to the middle of the third century:



Testimony of Bishop Charles Ellicott, chairman of the English Revised Version translation committee: “The manuscripts which Erasmus used differ, for the most part, only in small and insignificant details, from the great bulk of the cursive MSS. The general character of their text is the same. By this observation the pedigree of the Received Text is carried up beyond the individual manuscripts used by Erasmus ... That pedigree stretches back to remote antiquity. THE FIRST ANCESTOR OF THE RECEIVED TEXT WAS AT LEAST CONTEMPORARY WITH THE OLDEST OF OUR EXTANT MSS, IF NOT OLDER THAN ANY ONE OF THEM” (Bishop Ellicott, chairman of the ERV committee, *The Revisers and the Greek Text of the N.T. by two members of the N.T. Company*, pp. 11-12).

Testimony of John Burgon: Burgon’s research into New Testament quotations from ancient church writings has never equaled. The unpublished index of quotations from ancient fathers, which resides in the British Museum, consists of 16 thick manuscript volumes containing 86,489 references. Burgon’s research established that the Received Text was the prominent text of the early centuries. Some 4,383 of these 86,000 quotations were from 76 writers who died before the year 400 A.D. Jack Moorman observes: “Edward Miller carried on the work after Burgon’s death and put the material in a tabulated form showing the times a Church Father witnesses for and against the Received Text. He found the Received Text had the greater support by 2,630 to 1,753 or 3 to 2. Keeping in mind the Alexandrian and Western localities of these 76 Fathers, we have here quite a strong majority for the Received Text. Had the quotations of the Eastern Fathers been available, all indications are that the support would have been quite overwhelming. But the above evidence shows clearly also that there was a struggle over the text of Scripture in those early centuries. But, there was a clear winner!” (*Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*). Of Hort’s claim of superior antiquity for his text, Burgon replied: “You *talk* of ‘Antiquity.’ But you must know very well that you actually mean something different. You fasten upon three, or perhaps four,—on two, or perhaps three,—on one, or perhaps two,—documents of the IVth or Vth century. But then, confessedly, these are one, two, three, or four *SPECIMENS ONLY* of Antiquity,—not ‘Antiquity’ itself. And what if they should even prove to be *unfair samples* of Antiquity? ... You are for ever talking about ‘old Readings.’ Have you not yet discovered that ALL “Readings” are ‘OLD’?” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 243, 44). Burgon’s work has been despised, ridiculed, mischaracterized, and dismissed out of hand by modern textual critics, but it has never been refuted.

Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of England: “IT MUST BE EMPHASISED THAT THE ARGUMENT IS NOT BETWEEN AN

ANCIENT TEXT AND A RECENT ONE, BUT BETWEEN TWO ANCIENT FORMS OF THE TEXT, ONE OF WHICH WAS REJECTED AND THE OTHER ADOPTED AND PRESERVED BY THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE AND REMAINING IN COMMON USE FOR MORE THAN FIFTEEN CENTURIES. The assumptions of modern textual criticism are based upon the discordant testimony of a few specimens of the rejected text recently disinterred from the oblivion to which they had been deliberately and wisely consigned in the 4th century” (*The Divine Original*, TBS article No. 13, nd, p. 7).

Testimony of Harry Sturz, who surveyed all of the available papyri to discover how many contained support for the Traditional Greek Text and published his findings in *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984). He observes, “The papyri have now demonstrated ‘that the readings which Hort calls *Syrian* existed before the end of the fourth century.’ Byzantine readings have now been proven to be in existence by the end of the second century! ... In regard to the argument based on the silence of the Fathers, it should be observed that, contrary to the statements of WH and their followers, quotations from early Fathers *have* been found in support of Byzantine readings” (*The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 78). Jack Moorman summarizes Sturz’s findings. “He strikes a devastating blow at arguments which seek to minimize the fact that distinctive Byzantine readings do appear in the early papyri. He lists 150 Received Text readings which though not supported by the early Alexandrian and Western manuscripts are read by the mass of later manuscripts and by the early papyri. He lists a further 170 TR readings which again run counter to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but in this case find support from the Western manuscripts. These also are supported in the early papyri. In fact STURZ DEMONSTRATES PAPYRI SUPPORT FOR A TOTAL OF 839 READINGS WHICH IN VARYING DEGREES WOULD BE CLASSED AS ‘DISTINCTLY BYZANTINE.’ As the papyri is available for only 30% of the New Testament, existing evidence allows us to reasonably project that the story would be the same for the rest of the New Testament. What is especially remarkable about this is, the papyri comes from that area where the Alexandrian/shorter text was prevalent. Nearly all of the 267 uncial manuscripts move strongly to the side of the AV Text, with the same being true of the minuscules” (Jack Moorman, *Modern Bibles the Dark Secret*).

(2) Consider some ways that textual critics have sought to undermine these facts:

- (a) One mechanism used by the textual critics to discount the aforementioned facts is to claim that Burgon and Miller were not using the most approved

critical editions of “the fathers.” Edward Hills replies: “At any rate, Fee’s rebuttal is a very ancient one, rather out of date, namely, the attempt to invalidate Burgon’s patristic references by alleging that the editions of the Church Fathers which he used were old and out of date. Fair-minded naturalistic scholars, however, like Rendel Harris (1909), have recognized that Burgon’s arguments cannot be so easily disposed of” (Theodore Letis, cited from Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 50). “In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my *King James Defended* and my *Believing Bible Study* you will see that I have taken care to look up all the Burgon’s references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950-55, I spent many weeks at this task. ... In fact, THE NEWER GERMAN EDITIONS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS DIFFER LITTLE FROM THOSE OF THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES. CERTAINLY NOT ENOUGH TO AFFECT BURGON’S ARGUMENTS” (Letter from Edward F. Hills to Theodore Letis, February 15, 1980, as quoted in Letis, “Edward Freer Hills Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text,” unpublished M.T.S. Thesis, Emory University, 1987).

- (b) Another mechanism whereby the textual critics discount the aforementioned facts is by distinguishing between readings and texts. Admitting that individual Traditional Text readings can be found in the writings of ancient preachers prior to the third century, they claim that the Traditional Text *as a whole* or *as a text* cannot be found in the writings of any one “father.” This is a clever tactic but it is ineffective. “... in the face of substantial evidence they have been forced to a second line of defense: ‘Well, there may be Byzantine readings before 350, but there is no Byzantine Text!’ To which we would naturally reply that, given the large number of Byzantine readings, how can you have one without the other?” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look*, p. 7).
- (c) Another mechanism that the textual critics use at this point is to claim that the aforementioned Traditional text quotations in the writings of the early church “fathers” were added by later scribes. “... the common practice among patristic scholars is to dismiss distinctively Byzantine readings found in the writings of the Fathers unless the Father expressly comments on the significance of the Byzantine reading. This is due to the hypothesis that the scribes (who also copied the works of the Fathers as well as the New Testament manuscripts) would habitually and deliberately tend to alter the scriptural quotations of the Fathers into those with which they were familiar, namely, the Byzantine readings. ... If the Byzantine readings now summarily dismissed in the early Fathers were legitimately included, the Fathers’ overall text would be seen to be far more ‘Byzantine’ than current scholarly opinion claims. This was Burgon’s original contention, which was dismissed out of hand, due to his use of ‘uncritical’ editions of the Fathers. Current ‘critical’ editions, however, follow the above-mentioned practice of eliminating

distinctive Byzantine readings where unconfirmed by direct comment. Were this not so, Burgon's assertion might find contemporary corroboration" (Maurice Robinson, "The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to 'Majority Text' Theory," Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991). M. Jacob Suggs observes: "There is little evidence of systematic revision of New Testament citations except in translated works, and this is paralleled by the practice of modern translators of theological works in quoting Biblical passages in a familiar version rather than supplying a fresh translation" ("The Use of Patristic Evidence in the Search for a Primitive New Testament Text," *New Testament Studies*, IV, No. 2, Jan. 1958, 140; cited from Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, p. 79, footnote).

(3) Consider some other important considerations in regard to the witness of the early centuries:

- (a) It is important to understand that there are no extensive early writings in existence from the area of Antioch. The vast majority of the earliest extant quotations are from Egypt and Gaul. "Supporters of the WH theory point out that Chrysostom (who flourished in the last half of the fourth century) is the earliest Father to use the Byzantine text. HOWEVER, THEY CUSTOMARILY NEGLECT TO MENTION THAT THERE ARE NO EARLIER ANTIOCHIAN FATHERS THAN CHRYSOSTOM WHOSE LITERARY REMAINS ARE EXTENSIVE ENOUGH SO THAT THEIR NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS MAY BE ANALYZED AS TO THE TYPE OF TEXT THEY SUPPORT. THE SILENCE-OF-THE-FATHERS ARGUMENT HAS BEEN ASKED TO BEAR MORE WEIGHT THAN IT IS ABLE TO SUSTAIN. How can Fathers of other areas using other local text-types be expected to witness to the Antiochian text? And how could it be expected that the Antiochian text (i.e., the early form of it) can be attested by Fathers who have left little or no writings?" (emphasis added) (Harry Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-type*, pp. 80, 81).
- (b) In reality, there are very few manuscripts extant from the earliest centuries from all regions together, far too few to make sweeping conclusions about the textual situation that existed in those earliest centuries. Maurice Robinson observes: "Were a thousand papyrus and uncial MSS extant from before the fourth century which were relatively complete and sufficiently representative of the entire Eastern empire (by the location of their discovery), perhaps one could speak with greater authority than from the 63 fragmentary papyri we currently possess from that era. The resources of the pre-fourth century era unfortunately remain meager, restricted to a limited body of witnesses. Even if the text-critical evidence is extended through the eighth century, there would be only 424 documents, mostly fragmentary" (*New Testament Textual*

*Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority).*

- (c) Ordinary New Testament believers would generally have used less expensive papyri as opposed to the more expensive vellum made from animal skins. And apart from a few places with exceedingly dry climates, such as Egypt and the Judean desert, ancient papyri manuscripts simply have not survived. Only a few fragments from the first four centuries have survived even in Egypt.
- (d) Believers in the early centuries would have worn out their Scripture manuscripts quickly. This is true of believers today, but it would have been even truer then, when New Testament books were used not only for reading, study, and ministry, but also for copying.

g. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The method that the authors of the alleged Recension employed was "conflation"; they forged a new text by combining variant readings from two competing text types* (summarized from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). *Conflation* means to blend or fuse together. Hort claimed that the Traditional Text conflated readings from the "neutral" text (represented by Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) and the "western" text (represented by Codex D or Codex Bezae). Bruce Metzger accepts this principle and describes it as follows: "What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Rather than make a choice between them and copy only one of the two variant readings (with the attendant possibility of omitting the genuine reading), most scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing. This produced what is called a conflation of readings, and is characteristic of the later, Byzantine type of text" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 200). One example that Hort gave of an alleged conflation was Luke 24:53, where Codex D reads "praising God" and the Vaticanus reads "blessing God" and the Traditional Text has "praising and blessing God." Hort theorized that the scribes who allegedly created the Traditional Text "conflated" the two shorter readings to produce the longer one.

*COMMENT:*

- (1) While Hort, Metzger, and other textual critics speak of conflation authoritatively as if it were a historical fact, they have no evidence *whatsoever* that the Traditional Text is a product of this. It is pure speculation.
- (2) To say that "a conscientious scribe" would conflate two differing manuscripts is to say that God-fearing believers would brazenly modify the Word of God, and we do not believe this is true. In fact, no "conscientious" scribe would so modify the text before him. A scribe's task to copy not create, and a conscientious scribe would not exceed his duty.

- (3) Hort gave only eight examples from Mark and Luke to prove the alleged principle of conflation (Mk. 6:33; 8:26; 9:38; 9:49; Lk. 9:10; 11:54; 12:18; 24:53), but, as Wilbur Pickering observes, “to characterize a whole text for the whole New Testament on the basis of eight examples is foolish” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p. 28). John Burgon asked why, if conflation was one of the regular practices of the makers of the Traditional Text, could Westcott and Hort find only eight instances of his phenomenon? “Kenyon candidly admitted that he didn’t think that there were very many more” (Hills, p. 175).
- (4) In fact, the actual examples are even fewer than eight because four of the examples given by Hort do not exhibit any type of “conflation,” since Codex D actually contains a paraphrase of the Traditional Text in these instances (Mark 6:33, Mark 8:26, Luke 9:10, and Luke 11:54).
- (5) It is far more reasonable to assume that the process was omission on the part of the Alexandrian text rather than conflation on the part of the Traditional. We know for a fact that some heretics shortened the Scriptures, and we know that it is more common for copyists to omit words rather than add them. The handful of examples of alleged conflation cannot account for the massive number of omissions. Consider the omission of the dozens of entire verses, for example. “No amplification of B and Aleph could by any process of natural development have issued in the last twelve verses of St. Mark. But it was easy enough for the scribe of B not to write, and the scribe of Aleph consciously and deliberately to omit, verses found in the copy before him, if it were determined that they should severally do so. ... The original text could without any difficulty have been spoilt by leaving out the words, clauses, and sentences thus omitted: but something much more than the shortened text of B was absolutely essential for the production of the longer manuscripts. ... Codex B is discovered not to contain in the Gospels alone 237 words, 452 clauses, 748 whole sentences, which the later copies are observed to exhibit in the same places and in the same words. ... You will see therefore that B, and so Aleph, since the same arguments concern one as the other, must have been derived from the Traditional Text, and not the Traditional Text from those two Codexes” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, pp. 78, 79). “In Luke and Mark, B omits 1 of every 21 words, Aleph omits 1 of every 19 words, and D omits 1 of every 13 words. A [more] reliable copyist of the same era (Codex A) omits only one in 91 words. What would be unexpected about three unreliable witnesses omitting different words in 8 verses of Luke and Mark? For their major premise to even merit consideration they must show that fusion is possible and more credible than independent deletion” (Jeffrey Young, *Examination of Modern New Testament Text Criticism Theory and Methods*, 1995).

- (6) The existence of a “western” text has never been proven and the term is being dropped by textual critics today. The editors of the 4th edition of the UBS Greek N.T. refer to it as “the so-called Western text” (UBS4, Introduction, p. 5). Kurt and Barbara Aland say, “...the theory of a special ‘Western’ type of the text is improbable from the outset, and even its most passionate proponents never refer to it as ‘Western’ without using quotation marks” (*The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 68, 69). The example that Hort gives of a “western” text, Codex D, dates to the 6th century, which is some 200 years older than Vaticanus. He could give no other or earlier example. In fact, Codex D is of little value and appears even to have been back translated into Greek from Latin. “No known manuscript contains so many bold and extensive interpolations (six hundred, it is said, in the Acts alone) ... Mr. Harris from curious internal evidence, such as the existence in the text of a vitiated rendering of a verse of Homer which bears signs of having been retranslated from a Latin translation, infers that the Greek has been made up from the Latin” (Frederick Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, vol. 1, p. 130). John Burgon observed that D resembles a Targum (a loose paraphrase) more than a transcription. Burgon stated that Codex D omits, substitutes, adds, and transposes some 562 words in only three chapters of Luke, and that 250 of the words that are omitted are unique to this manuscript. Burgon concluded that a carelessly executed manuscript like this bears its own testimony of a lack of authenticity and cannot possibly be trusted to witness to the truth.
- (7) Westcott and Hort do not demonstrate *why* orthodox Christians in the region of Syria, where the apostolic missionary churches thrived, would practice conflation only two and a half centuries after the apostles. What would be the motive? Were they so entirely lacking in the fear of God that they were willing to make up a new text? Why would they give any attention whatsoever to texts coming out of Alexandria, which they knew was a hotbed of heresy and allegoricalism?
- (8) They also do not tell us how such a contrived text could be foisted upon the vast majority of churches so that it became the dominant text of the next 1,500 years.
- h. *Modern textual criticism’s theory*: The manuscript record contains ordinary scribal phenomena and does not reflect heretical attacks upon the Scripture. “It will not be out of place, to add here a distinct expression of our belief that even among the numerous unquestionably spurious readings of the New Testament there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, Introduction and Appendix, 1881).

COMMENT:

- (1) In making this claim, Hort ignored the Bible's own warnings that heretics would attack the truth; indeed, this was already occurring during the days of the apostles (e.g., Acts 20:29-30; 2 Cor. 2:17; 11:1-4, 12-15; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Pet. 3:1-2, 16; 1 Jn. 2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 John 8).
  - (2) Hort also ignored the facts of church history. Frederick Scrivener, a prominent textual scholar of the 19th century, testified, "It is no less true to fact than paradoxical in sound, that THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED ... the African Fathers and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephen, thirteen centuries after, when moulding the Textus Receptus" (Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, II, 4th edition, 1894, pp. 264, 265). We have documented the heretical attacks of the 2nd to the 4th centuries earlier in these studies -- Chapter I, A, "We hold to the King James Bible because it is based on the preserved Greek New Testament."
  - (3) Though modern textual critics since Westcott and Hort have admitted that there was theological tampering with the manuscripts, they have not given this the prominent role it should play in regard to the extant manuscript record of the 2nd to the 4th centuries. They have not given serious consideration to the possibility that Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and other Egyptian manuscripts are the product of such tampering.
- i. *Modern textual criticism's theory: The shorter reading is to be preferred*, because corruption by addition is more likely than corruption by omission. (This is summarized from Westcott and Hort, Introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 1881). This rule went back to Johann Wettstein, a Unitarian, and to Johann Griesbach, a modernist. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the Greek New Testament.

COMMENT:

- (1) This principle has not been proven by actual textual evidence; it is merely a theory designed to support the shorter Alexandrian text. In fact, the evidence points in the other direction, as stated by B.H. Streeter: "The notion is completely refuted that the regular tendency of scribes was to choose the longer reading. ... The whole question of interpolations in ancient MSS has been set in an entirely new light by the researches of Mr. A.C. Clark, Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford. ... in *The Descent of Manuscripts*, an investigation of the



manuscript tradition of the Greek and Latin Classics, he proves conclusively that the error to which scribes were most prone was not interpolation [addition] but accidental omission” (Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, 1930).

(2) Everyday experience demonstrates the truth of this. When copying something, it is easier to omit things than add things. Philip Mauro, a famous lawyer of the early 20th century who argued cases before the United States Supreme Court, observed: “The commonest of all mistakes in copying manuscripts, or in repeating a matter, are mistakes of omission, or lapses of memory, or the results of inattention. Hence it is an accepted principle of evidence that the testimony of one competent witness, who says he saw or heard a certain thing, carries more weight than that of a dozen who, though on the spot, can only say that they did not see or hear it, or that they do not remember it. Therefore, other things being equal, the affirmative evidence of the other ... ancient Codices and Versions, and that of the ‘Fathers’ who quote those verses as unquestioned Scripture, is an hundred-fold more worthy of credence than the negative testimony of the two [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] which were allowed to control in settling the text of the R.V.” (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised*, 1924). Mauro was referring to the English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Standard Version of 1901, which was formed after the principles of Westcott and Hort.

(3) When heretics are tampering with the text, it is easier to get away with omissions than additions.

(4) The vast majority of extant manuscripts throughout the church age have the “longer readings,” such as the “long” ending to Mark 16. The shorter Alexandrian text contained in a handful of manuscripts was rejected by God’s people throughout the church age.

j. *Modern textual criticism’s theory*: “The hard reading is to be preferred to the easy reading” (J.A. Bengel, *Novum Testamentum, Graecum*, p. 420; cited from E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 64).

*COMMENT*:

(1) This is another theory that is backed by no evidence but was devised specifically to support the Alexandrian text.

(2) Bengel developed this principle because he believed orthodox Christian scribes tended to simplify difficult texts. Thus he believed that orthodox Christians corrupted their own New Testament! This flies in the face of the love that Bible-believing Christians have for the Scriptures and their fear of tampering with God’s Word (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Isa. 66:2; 2 Thess. 2:17; Rev. 22:18-19).

- (3) The Bible warns that it is the devil that corrupts the simplicity of God's truth (2 Cor. 11:3).
  - (4) This theory ignores the fact that there were countless heretics tampering with manuscripts and creating spurious ones in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Wilbur Pickering observes, "In any case, the amply documented fact that numerous people in the second century made deliberate changes in the text, whether for doctrinal or other reasons, introduces an unpredictable variable which invalidates this canon. Once a person arrogates to himself the authority to alter the text there is nothing in principle to keep individual caprice from intruding or taking over--we have no way of knowing what factors influenced the originator of a variant (whoever he was) or whether the result would appear to us to be 'harder' or 'easier.' This canon is simply inapplicable" (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, chapter 4).
  - (5) This theory ignores the fact that many Egyptian manuscripts contain nonsensical readings created by the carelessness and ineptitude of the scribes. The papyri are notorious for this. A nonsensical reading would be the harder reading, but it is foolish to think that it is correct.
- k. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: "When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious" (J.J. Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum, Graece*, 2nd edition, 1809, vol. 1, pp. 75-82, cited from E.F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 65).

*COMMENT:*

- (1) Griesbach believed that whenever two manuscripts are at variance, and one contains sound doctrine and one contains heresy, the heresy must be preferred! However, we know that the Spirit of God who gave the Scriptures and who has guarded them does not inspire or preserve heresy. He is the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6).
  - (2) Only a heretic such as Griesbach, who denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture and the deity of Jesus Christ, would come up with such a strange theory, and yet he was influential in the field of textual criticism. Westcott and Hort said they venerated the name of Griesbach "above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament" (*New Testament in Greek*, 1881, vol. 2, p. 185). They adopted many of his principles of textual criticism and popularized them in their writings.
- l. The Traditional Text is clear and complete because it is the product of an editing

process. See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

- m. Modern textual criticism's theory: Bruce Metzger, following Westcott and Hort, believes that the text that is harsh and verbally dissident (characterized by difficulties and contradictions) is to be preferred to a text that is verbally harmonious. See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature:
- n. The textual critic can use conjecture to determine the correct reading. See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.
- o. "Only a soundly outlined history of the text will make it possible to retrace its various stages back to its original form". See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.
- p. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: "[By the eclectic method the editor] follows now one and now another set of witnesses in accord with what is deemed to be the author's style or the exigencies of transcriptional hazards" (Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, pp. 175, 176). See *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.
- q. *Modern textual criticism's theory*: "There are instances where no existing manuscript is likely to preserve the original wording; where none of the variants seem to be right, or where the original text does not make sense as far as current scholarship can determine. In such cases scholars must assume that the original wording of the text has been lost or distorted in the course of the copying process" (Michael Coogan, "Textual Criticism," *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, NRSV, 3rd edition, 2001).

*COMMENT*: This is a standard position among textual critics, that some of the original wording of the Bible has probably been lost; but it is a complete denial of divine preservation.

### **Conclusion:**

- a. We see that the principles of modern textual criticism are strange and unscriptural.
- b. Note that the modern textual critic's rules are loaded in favor of his theories. "You will not have to look at these 'rules' for long before realizing that they are 'weighted' in the direction of their own pre-determined preference for the Alexandrian Text. For example, if the Alexandrian Text is shorter than the

Traditional, then one firm rule is ‘The shorter reading is to be preferred.’ And, if ninety percent of the manuscripts support the Traditional Text and the remaining ten percent must be divided between the Alexandrian, Western and Caesarean texts, then of course, ‘numerical preponderance counts for nothing, the Traditional Text is merely one of four competing text types.’ And, should it be pointed out that the Alexandrian Text is less distinct doctrinally: then it is an established fact that ‘there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for doctrinal purposes during the early centuries.’ And on it goes!” (Jack Moorman, *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version, A Closer Look*, 1990, p. 6).

- c. Note, too, that the principles of modern textual criticism are very complicated. They involve such things as conflation, recension, inversion, eclecticism, conjectural emendation, intrinsic and transcriptional probability, interpolation, statistical probability, harmonistic assimilation, cognate groups, hypothesized intermediate archetypes, stemmatic reconstruction, and genealogical methods. It is impossible to reconcile this scholarly complexity with the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3) and with the scriptural fact that God has chosen the weak of this world to confound the mighty (Mat. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:20-29).

### **3. We reject modern textual criticism because its rules are unsettled and constantly changing, and also because the rules are applied in different ways by individual critics.**

Eldon Epp admits, “New Testament textual criticism ... is ALWAYS IN PROCESS. Its history is a record of various discoveries, insights, methods, and distinctive achievements that provide the basis for further investigation, but WITH FEWER DEFINITIVE CONCLUSIONS OR FINAL RESOLUTIONS THAN MIGHT BE EXPECTED” (“Decision Points in Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, edited by Epp and Gordon Fee, p. 17).

“Different scholars apply the canons very differently. Some place most of the weight on external criteria; others on internal. Some analyze readings starting with internal criteria, others with external. In other words, PEOPLE HAVE DIFFERENT RULES FOR USING THE RULES!” (Robert Waltz, *Canons of Criticism*, <http://www.skypoint.com/~waltzmn/CanonsOfCrit.html>).

A.E. Housman makes this telling statement: “Textual criticism is not a branch of mathematics, NOR INDEED AN EXACT SCIENCE AT ALL. ... It is therefore not susceptible of hard-and-fast rules. ... A textual critic engaged upon his business is not at all like Newton investigating the motions of the planets: HE IS MUCH MORE LIKE A DOG HUNTING FOR FLEAS” (Housman, “The Application of Thought to Textual Criticism,” *Proceedings of the Classical Association*, August 1921, xviii (London, 1922), pp. 68-69; cited from Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 219). We believe that a dog hunting fleas is, truly, an apt description of modern textual criticism.

B.B. Warfield described textual criticism as a matter of general averages and probabilities, sort of like a game of chance: “All ‘canons of criticism’ are ONLY GENERAL AVERAGES, AND OPERATE LIKE A PROBABILITY BASED ON A CALCULATION OF CHANCES” (Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 107).

Bruce Metzger makes this amazing admission: “SINCE TEXTUAL CRITICISM IS AN ART AS WELL AS A SCIENCE, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT IN SOME CASES DIFFERENT SCHOLARS WILL COME TO DIFFERENT EVALUATIONS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVIDENCE” (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 210). Seeking to establish the original text of the Bible is art! To the contrary, settling the text of Holy Scripture is neither art nor science; it is a spiritual task to determine the text inspired and preserved by God, and it can only be accomplished through faith and spiritual wisdom, based on biblical principles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet one thing Griesbach, Westcott, Hort, Kenyon, Epp, Streeter, Metzger, or Aland DO NOT mention is faith, biblical principles, and the Holy Spirit! And one thing they all agree on (with their evangelical and fundamentalist counterparts) is to discount any textual principle that even hints at being “theological.” The “fideistic” or “faith” approach is rejected out of hand. No wonder nothing is settled in this field. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Prov. 9:10).

#### **4. We further reject modern textual criticism because its fruit has been increasing uncertainty and skepticism, a weakening of the authority of Scripture, and the promotion of the ecumenical movement.**

- a. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS RESULTED IN UNCERTAINTY IN THE BIBLICAL TEXT.* Whereas prior to the late 19th century the vast majority of Bible-believing Christians were confident that the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts were the preserved Word of God, today there is no real certainty where textual criticism has been accepted. The Masoretic Hebrew has been challenged by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, and other sources, so that some twenty to thirty thousand textual changes have been suggested for the Old Testament. The Greek Received Text has been replaced with a constantly changing so-called “eclectic” text.

Note the following statements by prominent textual critics of the last 100 years testifying to the gross uncertainty produced by modern textual criticism.

“[The New Testament text is more unsettled] than ever, and PERHAPS FINALLY, UNSETTLED” (Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research*, 1908, p. 3).

“The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE” (F.C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism*, 1910, p. 129).

“In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, WE DO NOT KNOW THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE GOSPELS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT WE NEVER SHALL” (Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, p. vii).

“... it is generally recognized that THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE CANNOT BE RECOVERED” (R.M. Grant, “The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 66, 1947, p. 173).

“The textual history that the Westcott-Hort text represents is no longer tenable in the light of newer discoveries and fuller textual analysis. In the effort to construct a congruent history, our failure suggests that WE HAVE LOST THE WAY, that WE HAVE REACHED A DEAD END, and that only a new and different insight will enable us to break through” (Kenneth Clark, “Today’s Problems,” *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, edited by Parvis and Wikgren, 1950, p. 161).

“...the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that SKEPTICISM WHICH INCLINES TOWARDS REGARDING ‘THE ORIGINAL TEXT’ AS AN UNATTAINABLE MIRAGE” (G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 9).

“In general, THE WHOLE THING IS LIMITED TO PROBABILITY JUDGMENTS; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain A HYPOTHESIS” (H. Greeven, *Der Urtext des Neuen Testaments*, 1960, p. 20, cited from Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 67).

“...so far, the twentieth century has been a period characterized by GENERAL PESSIMISM ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOVERING THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY OBJECTIVE CRITERIA” (H.H. Oliver, 1962, p. 308; cited from Eldon Epp, “Decision Points in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, p. 25).

“The primary goal of New Testament textual study remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Niebuhr and others have called, in other contexts, AN ‘IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY’” (R.M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, 1963, p. 51).

“...every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN TEXTUAL THEORY SINCE WESTCOTT-HORT; THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATION OF THE TEXT IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Eldon J. Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 43, 1974, pp. 390-391).

“...we no longer think of Westcott-Hort’s ‘Neutral’ text as neutral; we no longer think of their ‘Western’ text as western or as uniting the textual elements they selected; and, of course, we no longer think so simplistically or so confidently about recovering ‘the New Testament in the Original Greek.’ ... WE REMAIN LARGELY IN THE DARK as to how we might reconstruct the textual history that has left in its wake--in the form of MSS and fragments--numerous pieces of a puzzle that we seem incapable of fitting together. Westcott-Hort, von Soden, and others had sweeping theories (which we have largely rejected) to undergird their critical texts, but we seem now to have no such theories and no plausible sketches of the early history of the text that are widely accepted. What progress, then, have we made? Are we more advanced than our predecessors when, after showing their theories to be unacceptable, we offer no such theories at all to vindicate our accepted text?” (Epp, “A Continuing Interlude in NT Textual Criticism,” *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism*, pp. 114, 115).

“As New Testament textual criticism moves into the twenty-first century, it must shed whatever remains of its innocence, for nothing is simple anymore. Modernity may have led many to assume that a straightforward goal of reaching a single original text of the New Testament--or even a text as close as possible to that original--was achievable. Now, however, REALITY AND MATURITY REQUIRE THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM FACE UNSETTLING FACTS, CHIEF AMONG THEM THAT THE TERM ‘ORIGINAL’ HAS EXPLODED INTO A COMPLEX AND HIGHLY UNMANAGEABLE MULTIVALENT ENTITY. Whatever tidy boundaries textual criticism may have presumed in the past have now been shattered, and its parameters have moved markedly not only to the rear and toward the front, but also sideways, as fresh dimensions of originality emerge from behind the variant readings and from other manuscript phenomena” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New

Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

The situation with modern textual criticism likened to that of Darwinian evolution

It is evident that the situation in the field of modern textual criticism is similar to that of Darwinian evolution. While many of the foundational principles of Darwin and his early followers have been refuted or seriously challenged, such as the theory that life could spontaneously arise or that natural selection could account for life as we know it or that man descended from apes, the superstructure of Darwinian evolution remains strangely unshaken. Likewise, modern textual criticism in the 21st century sits firmly upon the foundation laid by its architects of the 19th, and even as the foundational principles have been disproved (e.g., a Lucian Recension, the existence of a neutral text, the reliability of intrinsic and transcriptional probability) the superstructure remains largely and strangely unshaken. In the case of Darwinian evolution, the chief thing that was rejected in the beginning was the doctrine of a Creator, and regardless of how devastatingly the foundational principles of Darwinian evolution are disproved, contemporary adherents of evolution refuse to reconsider the doctrine of a Creator or any form of Intelligent Design. In the case of modern textual criticism, the chief thing that was rejected by Westcott and Hort and other early proponents was the Greek Received Text (and with it any practical doctrine of divine preservation), and regardless of how thoroughly the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been refuted by textual critics in the past 100 years, the children of Westcott and Hort refuse to take a new look at the Received Text. The reason is that the adherents of both disciplines refuse to admit that they must approach these subjects by faith in God and by faith alone, that they can never know the truth about creation or the Bible apart from faith in divine revelation. Any other foundation is shifting sand.

- b. MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS RESULTED IN “THE TYRANNY OF THE EXPERTS.” “The critical point of departure had been made [with the ascendancy of the Westcott-Hort Text]. No longer was the majority of the Greek manuscripts, preserved by the churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their ‘blindness and ignorance.’ By their scholarly expertise they would deliver to the churches a purer text of the N.T. Dr. Machen called this kind of scholarship ‘the tyranny of the experts.’ Now the ‘experts’ would rule over the churches and decide for them which variant reading was the acceptable one. After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora’s box had been opened. As a result, all the evils of German rationalism began to tear at the foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. This ‘wrestling’ of the Scriptures has



continued on until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. The situation today involves almost as many different texts of the Greek N.T. as there are scholars. Each ‘scholar’ decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. It comes down to two choices. We can accept the text handed down by the churches for nearly two thousand years or accept the findings of modern scholars, no two of which agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no one text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns among the scholars. There is no standard” (Charles Turner, *Why the King James Version*, p. 9; Turner is the founder of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute of Bowie, Texas).

- c. *THE CONTEMPORARY DOCTRINE OF ECLECTICISM HAS ELEVATED THE BIBLE STUDENT AS THE MASTER OF THE TEXT AND HAS RESULTED IN A MASSIVE DECLINE IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES IN THIS GENERATION.* The concept of dogmatic interpretation and preaching has been greatly reduced because of this damnable principle. In a typical Bible study in a church that has bought into eclecticism every individual is an authority unto his or herself as to what Greek manuscript or Greek text or English translation to follow in any given instance. There is no dogmatic authority for any statement, because someone can always come up with an alternative reading. This same principle has greatly weakened the authority of Bible preaching. I recall a visit in August 2003 to Saddleback Church in southern California, where Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Church” fame is senior pastor. I observed on the way into the auditorium that only a few people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the bewildering multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would have been impossible to have followed along in one’s Bible. The result is that the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching.
- d. *THE UNCERTAINTY PRODUCED BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS GIVEN AMMUNITION TO THE ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE.* They recognize, even if the evangelicals and fundamentalists who have adopted textual criticism do not, that an array of conflicting texts and versions undermines the doctrine of divine inspiration and preservation. Consider one example:

The Islamic Awareness website contains an article that quotes from the findings of modern textual criticism to cast doubt upon the Bible’s authenticity. The report concludes in this way: “It is pretty clear that the ‘original’ reading of the New Testament books is not restored. Well, we do not know what the ‘original’ reading is at the first place. The absurd claim that the Bible’s literal text is restored to 99.8%

is false as a quick comparison of the critical editions have shown above. The comparative study of the critical editions [published by Kurt and Barbara Aland] show a mere 63% agreement of the variant free verses not taking into consideration the orthographical differences. As far as the claim that the Bible being the word of God and its inerrancy is concerned, the less we talk about it, the better. This is because we do not have the ‘original’ text but myriad of imperfect, often divergent manuscripts from where the ‘original’ text has to be extracted by a committee of humans! Even worse, the ‘best’ reading is decided by voting!” (M.S.M. Saifullah and Abd ar-Rahman Robert Squires, *Textual Reliability of the New Testament*, 1999, <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Bible/Text/Bibaccuracy.html#3>).

The Muslims who wrote this article are correct in their assessment of the findings of modern textual criticism. If modern textual criticism is true, the original text of the Bible has not been preserved. Where these Muslims go astray is in their thinking that modern textual criticism is the only genuine approach to the Bible’s text.

This is only one example of how unbelievers use the work of modern textual critics to discredit the Scriptures. There is no doubt that the unbelieving principles and statements of rationalist modern textual critics (who overwhelmingly dominate the field) have given great cause for rejoicing to many unbelievers who would like nothing better than to believe that the Bible is a mere book.

e. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS LED MANY INTO THEOLOGICAL MODERNISM.*

(1) Dr. Edward Hills, who was trained in textual criticism at the doctorate level at Harvard, observed this phenomenon. “... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn’t it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn’t it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn’t it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. He has merely traveled farther down the same path which he began to tread when first he studied naturalistic textual criticism of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual criticism and then drop it most

illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study” (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*).

(2) The theological danger inherent within the practice of textual criticism was admitted more recently from the liberal side by E. Jay Epps of Harvard Divinity School: “Nor (for those who choose to work within a theological framework) is textual criticism a ‘safe’ discipline -- a phrase I have heard for four decades -- that can be practiced without challenge to theological convictions or without risk to faith commitments or truth assertions. I DOUBT THAT IT EVER WAS ‘SAFE’ -- AT LEAST FOR ANY WHO HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR MYRIAD VARIATION UNITS, WITH THEIR INNUMERABLE COMPETING READINGS AND CONCEPTIONS, AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN SO MANY. BUT IF IT HAS BEEN A ‘SAFE’ DISCIPLINE, IT IS SAFE NO MORE. ... Any who embrace it as a vocation will find its intellectual challenges to have been increased a hundredfold by its enlarged boundaries and broadened horizons, which extend into codicology and papyrology and also into related early Christian, classical, literary, and sociological fields, all of which favor accommodation of the richness of the manuscript tradition, WITH ITS MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS AND ITS MULTIVALENT ORIGINALS, RATHER THAN THE MYOPIC QUEST FOR A SINGLE ORIGINAL TEXT. Both broad training and knowledge, and A CAPACITY TO TOLERATE AMBIGUITY will be high on the list of requisite qualifications for its practitioners” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

(3) This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. What Epps did not say is that all of the many fields into which the modern textual critic is led are dominated today by theological skeptics; and the evangelical or fundamentalist who follows this course is disobeying the Bible by not separating from heretics and is in dire danger of spiritual shipwreck. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33).

f. *MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS FURTHERED THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT BY BRINGING PROTESTANTS, BAPTISTS, AND CATHOLICS TOGETHER IN THE FIELD OF BIBLE TEXTS, VERSIONS, AND TRANSLATION.* This is a powerful exhibit of the unscriptural fruit of modern textual criticism.

- (1) Whereas the Roman Catholic Church never accepted the Greek Received Text or the Protestant versions based on it and indeed it put translators such as William Tyndale and John Rogers to death, Rome has readily accepted the critical text. Note the following statement by a Roman Catholic: “Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of biblical translation...[They can] work very well together and HAVE THE SAME APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION...[This] signals A NEW AGE IN THE CHURCH” (Patrick Henry, *New Directions in New Testament Study*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979, pp. 232-234).
- (2) The papal proclamation “Divine afflante Spiritu” in 1943 called for an ecumenical Bible. “[T]hese translations [should] be produced in cooperation with separated brothers” (*New American Bible*, New York: World Publishing Co., 1970, p. vii).
- (3) In fact, Rome has conformed its own Vulgate to the modern critical text. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). It was published in 1979 by the German Bible Society.
- (4) In 1966 the Revised Standard Version was published in the “Roman Catholic Edition.” This version included the apocryphal books inserted among the books of the Old Testament and incorporated Catholic readings such as “full of grace” in Luke 1:28. As a result, the chief editor of the RSV, Luther Weigle, was rewarded the “Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great” in 1966 by Pope Paul VI (Peter Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, 1999, p. 142).
- (5) Since 1967, Cardinal Carlo Martini has been on the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.
- (6) In October 1969, for the first time in its history the Church of England authorized a Catholic Bible for use in its services. The Full Synod of Canterbury Convocation authorized *The Jerusalem Bible*, which was published in 1966 with the imprimatur of Cardinal Heenan.
- (7) In 1973 the Ecumenical Edition of the Revised Standard Version was published. Also called the “Common Bible,” a copy was presented personally to Pope Paul VI by Bruce Metzger, Herbert May, and others. Metzger described this as follows: “In a private audience granted to a small group, comprising the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras, Lady Priscilla and Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and the present writer, POPE PAUL ACCEPTED THE RSV

‘COMMON’ BIBLE AS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN FURTHERING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS AMONG THE CHURCHES” (Metzger, “The RSV-Ecumenical Edition,” *Theology Today*, October 1977).

- (8) The Bible Societies translation projects today are “interconfessional.” In 1987 a formal agreement was made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament will be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, Rome, 1987, p. 5). (For more about ecumenical translations see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

### **Conclusion of why we reject modern textual criticism**

- a. What is the one key Bible doctrine that overthrows modern textual criticism?

*Answer:* It is the doctrine of divine preservation. According to modern textual criticism the pure Scriptures were discarded in the fourth century and not “recovered” until the 19th. This is one of its fundamental principles and is the reason why textual critics can discard the Traditional Text so flippantly, but such a thing is impossible upon its very face if divine preservation as taught in the Scriptures is true.

- b. Modern textual criticism is an unsettled pseudo-science. It is a “science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20).
- c. Modern textual criticism dismissed the Traditional Text found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts by claiming that it was the product of an alleged recension that occurred in the early centuries, though there is no evidence for such a thing.
- d. Modern textual criticism is complicated and is therefore suitable only for the scholarly elite.
- e. Modern textual criticism has produced uncertainty, skepticism, a weakening of the authority of the Bible, and has encouraged the back to Rome movement.

Suggestions for further reading on this topic: (1) John Burgon’s exposure of the error of the Westcott-Hort theories, as contained in *The Revision Revised*, is devastating. David Otis Fuller published an abbreviated form of this in *True or False?* (2) Another scholarly critique of the Westcott-Hort textual theories is *The Identity of the New Testament Text* by Wilbur Pickering (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1977). This is available online at <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>. Pickering, who has a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Toronto, dismantles the principles of Westcott and Hort point by point. The research for the first edition

of this book was done for a master's thesis Pickering submitted to the Dallas Theological Seminary in 1968. The thesis was published in 1973 in *True or False?* (We strongly disagree with Pickering's support for the *Hodges-Farstad Majority Text* and his proposed revision of the Greek Received Text and the King James Bible, but one does not have to agree with all of Pickering's conclusions to benefit from his extensive research in this field.) (3) Edward F. Hills' *The King James Version Defended* contains a masterly refutation of modern textual criticism. (4) An excellent brief summary of the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism is contained in Jack Moorman's *Modern Bibles--the Dark Secret*. This is available online at <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fbcdarks.htm>. All of these are available in print from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART II. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE THEORIES UNDERLYING THE MODERN GREEK TEXT ARE HERETICAL**

1. What is textual criticism?
2. When was modern textual criticism developed?
3. In what way did the fathers of modern textual criticism treat the Bible differently than other books?
4. What is the attitude of modern textual critics to the Received Text that underlies all of the Reformation Bibles?
5. The modern Greek New Testament is how much shorter than the Received Text?
6. What were the first two English versions of any significance that were based on the critical Greek New Testament?
7. What are the two favorite manuscripts of the modern textual critic?
8. Where is the Vaticanus manuscript located?
9. When and where did it originate?
10. How was Erasmus familiar with the Vaticanus?
11. How long did Roman Catholic officials keep scholars from copying the Vaticanus manuscript?
12. What did Westcott and Hort think of the Vaticanus?
13. How does the Vaticanus identify itself as a product of gnostic corruption?
14. How many words are left out of the Vaticanus in the Gospels that are found in the majority of manuscripts?
15. What is the significance of the vacant column at the end of Mark's Gospel in the Vaticanus?
16. Where and by whom was the Sinaiticus discovered?
17. How many corrections did Tischendorf count in this manuscript?
18. How do we know that the scribes who copied the Sinaiticus were careless?
19. How is the Sinaiticus associated with Origen?
20. What is strange about Mark 16:9-20 in the Sinaiticus?
21. What two heretical writings are bound together in the Sinaiticus?

22. How many words are omitted in the Gospels in Codex D compared with the majority of manuscripts?
23. Codex D is filled with mistakes and even nonsensical readings; what nonsensical reading does Codex D have in 1 Cor. 15:51?
24. In what way does Codex D attack the doctrine of Christ's ascension?
25. How many times did Tischendorf alter the eighth edition of his Greek New Testament on the "authority" of Sinaiticus?
26. What Greek manuscripts do the editors of the New International Version call "the two most reliable"?
27. What two modern Greek New Testaments combine the readings of the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus?
28. What Greek manuscripts did Kurt and Barbara Aland call "the two most important uncials"?
29. What Greek manuscripts are meant when modern version marginal notes refer to "oldest and best manuscripts"?
30. The Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts are called Alexandrian because they are from the city of Alexandria; in what country is this located?
31. What was the chief characteristic of Egypt in the early centuries after the apostles during the days that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were created?
32. What two Greek manuscripts are the source of most of the omissions and glaring changes in the modern versions?
33. What important doctrine is weakened in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus?
34. In Acts 20:28, the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus change "church of God" to "church of the Lord"; how does this weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity?
35. In Romans 14:10, the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus change "judgment seat of Christ" to "judgment seat of God"; how does this weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity?
36. In 1 John 4:3, the Vaticanus changes "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" to "confesseth not Jesus" and most modern version follow this change; how does this weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity?
37. How many times do the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus differ from one another in the Gospels alone?
38. After studying the five most ancient Greek uncials for five and one half years, John Burgon concludes that Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Codex D are "three of the most ----- ----- copies extant: exhibit the most ----- ----- texts which are anywhere to be met with..."
39. John Burgon concluded that the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus owed their survival solely to what?
40. John Burgon called Sinaiticus and Vaticanus "two ----- witnesses"?
41. Do we have papyri manuscripts for the entire New Testament?
42. What are the two major collections of papyri?
43. To what do the papyri owe their survival?
44. How do we know that the scribes who copied many of the papyri were inept and careless?
45. Why did the Gnostics try to dissociate Jesus from Christ?
46. Why do we believe that the scribes who copied p66 and p75 did not know Greek?

47. The papyri also contain fictional writings such as the ----- of Mary and the eleventh Ode of -----.
48. What scholar has demonstrated that the papyri often support the Traditional Text?
49. In what way does the doctrine of preservation assure us that the papyri should not be used to overthrow the traditional Greek New Testament?
50. What are the four major reasons why we reject modern textual criticism?
51. What is the goal of modern textual criticism?
52. How is this goal unscriptural?
53. What important doctrine do the modern textual critics almost never even mention?
54. Why does Jack Moorman liken textual criticism to “The Artful Dodger”?
55. According to modern textual criticism, in what way should the Bible be treated differently than other ancient books?
56. How can we know that true believers were careful in copying the New Testament?
57. How was the New Testament treated in Egypt in the midst of so many heretics and false Christians?
58. According to the textual record, how many textual families are there?
59. Do we know the genealogical history of the Greek manuscripts?
60. John Burgon said that “talk about genealogical evidence, when applied to manuscripts is -----.”
61. Modern textual critics disregard the majority of Greek manuscripts by means of the theory that the majority text was created in the 4th century by a recension; what historical evidence do they have for such a theory?
62. John Burgon called Hort’s theory of a Syrian recension “an excursion into -----.”
63. Why is the following statement true? “It is unreasonable to think that the church at Antioch would look to any other realm in textual matters or would have countenanced any sort of ‘recension’ that ‘conflated’ three competing texts.”
64. How did John Burgon turn Hort’s theory of a recension on its head and use it to overthrow Hort’s own Alexandrian text?
65. How does the doctrine of divine preservation disprove modern textual criticism’s theory that the Traditional text is a product of a recension?
66. Modern textual critics claim that John Burgon was not using proper editions of “the fathers” in his research into their New Testament quotations. How did Edward Hills answer this charge?
67. How many New Testament quotations do we have from Syria and Antioch from the earliest centuries?
68. Why did a few manuscripts from the first three centuries survive from Egypt while none survived from Syria?
69. Hort claimed that the Traditional Text is a product of conflation; what is this?
70. Would a conscientious believer take three conflicting New Testament manuscripts and conflate them to produce something new?
71. How many examples of “conflation” could Hort find?
72. True or false: It is far more reasonable to assume that the Alexandrian text omitted things than that the believers in Syria added things.



73. What do current textual critics believe about a “western text”?
74. Why would the believers in Syria, where the great apostolic church of Antioch was located, modify their New Testament with additions or conflation from manuscripts from Egypt?
75. Hort denied that the early New Testament manuscripts were deliberately falsified by heretics. What two things did Hort ignore in making such a statement?
76. How does everyday experience disprove the textual theory that “the shorter reading is to be preferred”?
77. What verse says the devil corrupts the simplicity that is in Christ?
78. Is it reasonable to assume that a manuscript that exhibits “verbal dissidence” is the preserved Word of God?
79. What does “eclectic” mean in regard to textual criticism?
80. What percentage of modern textual critics use the eclectic method?
81. How do we know that the eclectic method is subjective and uncertain?
82. How do we know that the eclectic method is not significantly different from the Westcott-Hort method?
83. In light of God’s promises, can it be possible that some parts of the original Scriptures have been lost?
84. What verse says God has hidden His truth from the wise and revealed it to babes?
85. What verse says God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise?
86. A.E. Housman likened modern textual criticism to what?
87. Bruce Metzger says modern textual criticism is “an --- as well as a science.”
88. Rendel Harris said the New Testament text is “perhaps finally, -----.”
89. F.C. Conybeare claimed the New Testament text “is for ever -----.”
90. Kirsopp Lake claimed that “we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we -----.”
91. How can modern textual criticism be likened to Darwinian evolution?
92. What is the “tyranny of the experts”?
93. How does Saddleback Church illustrate how the multiplicity of modern versions has weakened biblical authority?
94. Edward Hills warned, “... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to -----”
95. E. Jay Epps warned about modern textual criticism, “If it has been a ‘safe’ discipline, it is --- - - - -.”
96. Roman Catholic Patrick Henry said the ecumenical activities between Catholics and Protestants in the field of Bible texts “signals a --- --- in the church.”
97. In what year did the Vatican call for an ecumenical Bible?
98. In what year did the Revised Standard Version appear in a Catholic edition?
99. What is the one key Bible doctrine that overthrows modern textual criticism?
100. What verse warns about science falsely so called?

# III. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS ARE A PRODUCT OF END-TIME APOSTASY

## Section Summary

1. Introduction
2. The association between apostasy and modern textual criticism stated.
3. A look at the apostate conditions that existed in Europe, England, and America when modern textual criticism was being formulated.
  - Theological liberalism was blossoming
  - Human Philosophy was exalting itself against God's Word
  - Unitarianism was making great gains
  - Communism was rising
  - Evolution was developing
  - Heretical Christian cults were blossoming
  - Feminism was rising
  - Roman Catholicism was making new advances
4. A look at the apostasy of some of the influential textual critics and modern version translators, from Richard Simon in the 18th century to the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament in the 20th.
5. Conclusion

## INTRODUCTION

1. One of the reasons why we reject modern textual criticism is its affinity to and intimate association with end time apostasy. I don't see how this can be denied in light of the following documentation. The following portions of the Word of God should be read very carefully in this light, as they contain warnings about the believer's association with apostasy: Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14; Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 3:5; 2 John 7-11; Rev. 18:4.
2. The following information is abbreviated from *The Bible Version Hall of Shame*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.
3. This information is the fruit of 25 years of research. When I first began studying the Bible text-version issue in about 1979, I wanted to check my sources and base my research upon primary documents, as much as possible, and I have pursued that goal over the past quarter century. Today my personal library contains a large percentage of the books that have been published in this field in English in the past 200 years. I have researched this issue at libraries such as Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., Westminster Seminary, the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville; the British Library; Heritage Baptist University's collection of rare

Bibles; the Mack Library at BJU; the Museum of Waldensian History at Torre Pellice, Italy; the Moravian Museums in Pennsylvania and North Carolina; the Scriptorium Center for Biblical Studies in Orlando, Florida; the Cambridge University Library; the Spurgeon Library at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri; Wake-Forest University Library; the Waldensian Museum in Valdese, North Carolina; the William Tyndale Museum in Vilvoorde, Belgium; the Gutenberg Museum in Germany; the Erasmus House in Belgium.

4. Bible believers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were busy rejoicing in, preaching, and obeying the Scriptures. On the other hand, the textual critics were flying in the face of the doctrine of preservation. Rejecting the Traditional Text that had been handed down to them by Bible-believing Christians, they were groping around in dark monasteries and papal libraries trying to rediscover the supposed lost Word of God. Their ears were attuned to the vain philosophies emanating from Germany, and they were applying secular principles of textual criticism to the biblical text.

5. While not every adherent of modern textual criticism is a modernist or a Unitarian or a skeptic or a rationalist, most of its chief architects and proponents have been. Evangelicals such as the Baptist A.T. Robertson and the Presbyterian B.B. Warfield did not develop textual criticism but merely rehashed and passed along that which they received from the rationalistic fathers in this field. The same was true for Samuel Tregelles in England. Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney in 1871 observed that evangelicals adopted the critical text “FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM” (Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

## **THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN APOSTASY AND MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM STATED BY MEN OF GOD**

The following are only a few examples of such statements by discerning men of God. Many more can be found in the 460-page book *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the King James Version and the Received Text from 1800 to Present*, available from Way of Life Literature.

1. **The Testimony of John Burgon and Edward Miller**: “That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God. ... *It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as “Textual Criticism”*” (Burgon and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9).

2. **The testimony of Robert L. Dabney** (1820-1898), 19th century Presbyterian scholar. Dabney taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1853 to 1883 and pastored the College Church during most of those years. He contributed to a number of publications, including *the Central Presbyterian*, the *Presbyterian Critic*, and the *Southern Presbyterian*. His last years

were spent with the Austin School of Theology in Texas, a university he co-founded. He boldly withstood the apostasy that was creeping in on every side in this day. Dabney said that evangelicals who were accepting modern textual criticism had adopted it “from the mint of infidel rationalism” (Dabney, *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). This would have applied to Charles Hodge, another Presbyterian leader of that day, but one who was promoting modern textual criticism instead of resisting it. Dabney published a perceptive article called “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek.” He described the attempts of textual critics such as Griesbach and Tischendorf to reject the Greek Received Text and to replace it with the Alexandrian text. Dabney showed that the changes made in the text favored Unitarianism and he believed the 4th century Alexandrian text was a product of heretical corruption. Consider this excerpt from Dabney: “THE SIGNIFICANT FACT TO WHICH WE WISH ESPECIALLY TO CALL ATTENTION IS THIS: THAT ALL THE VARIATIONS PROPOSED ON THE FAITH OF THESE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH HAVE ANY DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE, SHOULD ATTACK THE ONE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY; nay, we may say even more specifically, the one doctrine of Christ’s deity. ... Their admirers [of the favored manuscripts supporting the critical text] claim for them an origin in the fourth or fifth century. The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the third and fourth. Is there no coincidence here? Things do not happen again and again regularly without a cause. ... And when we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest, and compare it with the supposed date of these exemplars of the sacred text, the ground of suspicion becomes violent. ... THESE VARIATIONS ARE TOO NUMEROUS, AND TOO SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ONE DOCTRINE, TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHANCE. ... there are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of the Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous ORIGEN, which has not been usually appreciated.”

3. **The Testimony of George Perkins Marsh**, who spoke out against the English Revision of 1881: “The acuteness of German criticisms, the speculations of German philosophy, have given rise to a great multitude and diversity of opinions, not on questions of verbal interpretation merely, but of doctrines also, which are but just now beginning to be openly and freely discussed in this country and in England, and THE MINDS OF MEN ARE NOW PERHAPS MORE UNSETTLED ON THESE TOPICS THAN THEY HAVE BEEN AT ANY TIME BEFORE FOR THREE CENTURIES. ... the future is more uncertain than the past ... the irreverent and wanton thoughtlessness of an hour may destroy that which only the slow and painful labor of years or of centuries can rebuild” (George Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language*, New York: Charles Scribner, 1860, p. 630).

4. **The testimony of George Samson, President, Columbian College and Rutgers Female College.\*** In 1882 Samson described the connection between rationalism and modern textual criticism. After examining the principles of textual critics such as Lachmann, Samson wrote: “STUDIED EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ‘TEXTUS RECEPTUS’ BEGAN IN GERMANY, AMONG THE REJECTERS OF THE SUPERNATURAL INTERPOSITION CLEARLY MANIFEST IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

RECORDS; whose verity was maintained by evangelical as distinct from rationalistic interpreters. IT WAS FOSTERED BY GERMAN SPECULATIVE TENDENCIES OF THOUGHT; and has unconsciously pervaded the minds not only of a large class in the State Churches of Germany and of England, but has stolen into the Scottish Presbyterian State and Free Churches, and has also influenced a large class of American Biblical students who have over-estimated the comparative value of German philological research. THE SPECULATIVE TENDENCY OF GERMAN INTELLECT ... has been manifest to the acutest and most comprehensive scholars in every department of research. ... Within the last twenty years Dornes in his exhaustive treatise, and Ritschl by his keen supplementary analysis, have shown, from their native point of view in German theology, how the 'subjective' tendency to individual speculation has overruled 'objective' devotion to the impartial interpretation of the teachings of Jesus and His apostles ... MEANWHILE THE QUIET WORK OF UNDERMINING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WHOLE FABRIC OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, HAS GONE ON; and that through the 'subjective' rule of 'internal evidence' unconsciously accepted as legitimate by editors of the Greek New Testament, like Griesbach and Hahn; and as unconsciously received by American and English as well as German Bible students" (Samson, *The English Revisers' Greek Text*, 1882, pp. 97, 126-128). [\* Columbian College began as a Baptist institution. It was approved at the second meeting of the Baptist General Convention in 1817, received a charter from Congress in 1821, and opened in 1822 (William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, 1883). Its first property was obtained through the efforts of Luther Rice, former missionary to Burma. The name was changed in 1873 to Columbian University and in 1904 to George Washington University. George Samson was president from 1858-71, at which time he accepted the presidency of Rutgers Female College of New York.]

**5. The Testimony of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England,** which was formed in 1831 in protest to the liberalism that had already taken root within the British & Foreign Bible Society. Consider this statement: "The last century has witnessed a steady drift away from the deity of Christ and towards 'unitarianism'. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SCHOLARS WHO HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THIS TIDE OF UNBELIEF SHOULD WELCOME THE SUPPORT OF THESE UNRELIABLE DOCUMENTS" (Terence H. Brown, *God Was Manifest in the Flesh*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1965). A similar charge was made in T.B.S. Article #14: "Textual Criticism, the evaluation of the actual manuscripts in the ancient languages, the preparation of printed editions of the Hebrew and Greek Text, and the modern translations now being made in English and many other languages, are very largely conducted under the direction or influence of scholars who by their adoption of these erroneous theories have betrayed the unreliability of their judgment in these vital matters. WE MUST NOT PERMIT OUR JUDGMENT TO BE OVERAWED BY GREAT NAMES IN THE REALM OF BIBLICAL 'SCHOLARSHIP' WHEN IT IS SO CLEARLY EVIDENT THAT THE DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS OF THE PRESENT CENTURY ARE MERELY REPRODUCING THE CASE PRESENTED BY RATIONALISTS DURING THE LAST TWO HUNDRED YEARS. Nor should we fail to recognise that scholarship of this kind has degenerated into a skeptical crusade against the Bible, tending to lower it to the level of an ordinary book of merely human

composition” (*If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, T.B.S. Article No. 14, p. 13).

**6. The Testimony of the Bible League of England, which was formed in Britain in 1892:** “In the eighteenth century Religious Rationalism was begotten in Germany and began to spread in its Universities. It has influenced and debased the theological thought in almost the whole of Protestant Christendom. ... The Father of this new revolutionary attitude to the Word of the Lord and the Lord of the Word was J.S. Semler (1725-91), Professor of Theology at Halle. One of his pupils, J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812) was appointed Professor of the New Testament at Jena in 1775. ... It should not be surprising, nor should it be overlooked, that Griesbach, INFLUENCED FROM HIS UNDERGRADUATE DAYS BY THE RISING TIDE OF RATIONALISM SWEEPING OVER HIS COUNTRY, WAS A FOE OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. He abandoned the Textus Receptus, and constructed a new Greek New Testament text” (emphasis added) (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*, Surrey: The Bible Christian Unity Fellowship, pp. 39-40; reprint of four articles which appeared in *The Bible League Quarterly*, London, 1973).

**7. The Testimony of Zane Hodges,** who was Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1959-87. Hodges associated modern textual criticism with theological rationalism in a 1971 article. “The acceptance of the newer critical editions of the New Testament does not rest on factual data which can be objectively verified, but rather upon a prevailing consensus of critical thought. IT WILL BE THE PURPOSE OF THIS DISCUSSION TO SHOW THAT CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL TEXTS ARE, IN FACT, THE FRUIT OF A RATIONALISTIC APPROACH TO NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... Modern textual criticism is psychologically ‘addicted’ to Westcott and Hort. Westcott and Hort, in turn, were rationalists in their approach to the textual problem in the New Testament and employed techniques within which rationalism and every other kind of bias are free to operate. The result of it all is a methodological quagmire where objective controls on the conclusions of critics are nearly nonexistent. It goes without saying that no Bible-believing Christian who is willing to extend the implications of his faith to textual matters can have the slightest grounds for confidence in contemporary critical texts” (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971, pp. 27-35).

**8. The Testimony of Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in modern textual criticism from Harvard University:** “Has the text of the New Testament, like those of other ancient books, been damaged during its voyage over the seas of time? Ought the same methods of textual criticism to be applied to it that are applied to the texts of other ancient books? These are questions which the following pages will endeavor to answer. An earnest effort will be made to convince the Christian reader that this is a matter to which he must attend. FOR IN THE REALM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF MODERN THOUGHT ARE HOSTILE TO THE HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH AND WILL DESTROY IT IF THEIR FATAL OPERATION IS NOT CHECKED. If faithful Christians, therefore, would defend their sacred religion against this

danger, they must forsake the foundations of unbelieving thought and build upon their faith, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, they will find themselves led back step by step (perhaps, at first, against their wills) to the text of the Protestant Reformation, namely, that form of New Testament text which underlies the King James Version and the other early Protestant translations. ... WEAKENED BY DEAD ORTHODOXY AND PIETISM, CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS OF THE LATE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES FAILED TO RESIST THE RISING NEUTRAL WORLD-VIEW AS VIGOROUSLY AS THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE. Instead of taking their stand upon God's revelation of Himself in holy Scripture and pointing out that the neutral world-view is not really neutral but antichristian and full of contradictions, they began to adopt it themselves, especially in those areas of thought not specifically covered by their Reformation creeds, namely, philosophy and biblical introduction and above all New Testament textual criticism" (Edward Hills, *The King James Bible Defended*, pp. 1, 44).

## **A LOOK AT THE APOSTATE CONDITIONS THAT EXISTED IN EUROPE, ENGLAND, AND (TO A LESSER DEGREE\*), AMERICA WHEN MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM WAS BEING FORMULATED**

[\* The religious climate in America in the 19th century was significantly different from that of Germany and England, and, in fact, is still so. This was because there was no state church in America and also because of spiritual revivals. (While England experienced revivals, they were less frequent and did not last as long or reach as far.) The Second Great Awakening in America occurred in the late 18th century, beginning with a Concert of Prayer by Baptist churches in New England in 1795. Presbyterians and Methodists followed suit and the revival spread through America's eastern seaboard and then to the frontier. Many evangelists were involved in stirring up the churches to godliness. Midweek prayer meetings and Sunday Schools became common for the first time. Existing Bible colleges and seminaries were revived and some 20 new ones established. The revival resulted in an important split between Unitarians and evangelicals in the Congregational churches. Missionary endeavors and Bible publishing were greatly increased. The first American missionary board was established in 1810 and sent Adoniram Judson to Burma. As the 19th century progressed, there were many other revivals. It is estimated that there were at least a million conversions in America between 1858 and 1859 alone, as revival swept both the North and the South prior to the Civil War. There were also revivals during the American Civil War, beginning among Confederate forces in 1861 and moving throughout the armies and into society in general by 1863. There were far-reaching revivals in the 19th century that accompanied the ministries of prominent evangelists, such as Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, Billy Sunday, R.A. Torrey, and J. Wilbur Chapman. Revivals continued into the early 20th century. The awakening of 1905 affected all parts of America and reached into Canada and the British Isles. Methodists,

Baptists, Presbyterians and Lutherans reported an increase of 600,000 members as the 20th century began. The fundamentalist movement of the early 20th century was a revival movement that had vast consequences to every strata of American society, and this movement continues to this day. During the first half of the 20th century it was more of an interdenominational movement, affecting both Protestant and Baptist denominations. Since the second half of that century, the fundamentalist movement has been more restricted to Bible churches and independent Baptists, but this is not to say that the movement is small. The number of fundamentalist churches in America even today runs into the tens of thousands, and this is a powerful revival movement and a godly “leaven” within U.S. society that has no counterpart in England or Europe.]

**1. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM was blossoming.**

- a. Nominal Christianity paved the way for apostasy both in Europe and in England.
  - (1) In Germany the Lutheran state church was spiritually powerless. The citizens of the nation were members of the church by birth and by infant baptism, but they were not born again and the new birth was seldom preached. Though Pietist movements such as the Moravian sprouted from time to time, these did not bring about permanent change because they did not make a plain break with the heresy of infant baptism and sacramentalism and succeeding generations would quickly fall back into nominalism and ritualism.
  - (2) A similar situation existed in England. The Church of England dominated the nation’s religious life, and it largely represented a nominal Christianity. In the 18th century George Whitefield was referring to conditions in the Church of England when he observed, “In our days, to be a true Christian, is really to become a scandal” (*George Whitefield’s Journals*, London; Banner of Truth, 1960, p. 32). Wesley and Whitefield found that there was no room within the Church of England for preaching the new birth in a scriptural fashion. But in England, unlike Germany, there was a stronger evangelical movement within the state church and a much stronger evangelical church movement apart from the state church, as represented by Baptists, Methodists, Brethren, and others.
- b. Biblical criticism had its origin among Roman Catholics who were opposed to the Protestant Reformation and its sole authority for faith and practice, the Bible. “So eager were the Jesuits to destroy the authority of the Bible--the paper Pope of the Protestants, as they contemptuously called it--that they even did not refrain from criticizing its genuineness and historical value” (Ernst von Dobschutz, *The Influence of the Bible on Civilization*, 1914, p. 136).



- (1) Richard Simon (1638-1712), a French Roman Catholic priest, questioned the Bible's historical authority and was "the forerunner of modern biblical criticism" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 4, p. 492).
- (2) Jean Astruc (1684-1766) was a French Roman Catholic medical doctor and theologian. He was the son of a Protestant pastor who had converted to Catholicism. In 1753, he published "Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Génèse" ("Conjectures on the original documents that Moses appears to have used in composing the Book of Genesis"), in which he claimed that Genesis was composed from various sources. He conjectured that Moses used two documents, one that used the name Elohîm and the other that used the name Jehovah. Astruc's "work opened the modern era of critical Biblical inquiry" (*Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*). Astruc's documentary hypothesis was taken up by Eichhorn in Germany.
- c. By the mid-18th century, it was the age of "enlightenment" in which rationalism was positively encouraged by Frederick II, the "philosopher king," who reigned over Prussia 46 years (1740-1786). The "age of enlightenment" should be called the "age of unbelief." Frederick was "a thorough rationalist and patron of 'free thought.' The sight of a cross, it was said, was enough to make him blaspheme" (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, p. 5). The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* of 1934 correctly defined "Enlightenment" as "shallow and pretentious intellectualism, unreasonable contempt for authority and tradition."
- d. Following are some of the prominent names in the development of theological modernism:

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) was a German poet, playwright, theologian, and Lutheran deist. He is known as "the father of German criticism" (*Minute History of the Drama*, 1935). As a young man he was engaged in translating the works of Voltaire, who lived for some time in Germany, but Lessing parted ways with Voltaire and developed his own unbelieving philosophies. Lessing was a prominent voice in a new approach to history that led to the concept of "organic development." "Lessing regarded history as a continuous process by which an immanent god gradually educated humanity. Humanity was seen as a giant individual developing from infancy through childhood to maturity; always changing but always the same individual and at each stage of development gaining advanced ethics. The word applied to this process is *aufheben*. Revelation was merely the progressive instruction of the race and was not only denied to be *ab extra*, or from without, but also was not ever intended to be a fixed deposit given once for all. It required to be changed from age to age. This

process of religious education of the races, with its necessary advancement in doctrine, eventually became the concept of organic development” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, pp. 8, 9).

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827) developed and popularized Jean Astruc’s documentary theory. It was Eichhorn who made the distinction between “lower criticism” and “higher criticism.” *Lower criticism* is the examination of manuscripts to “recover” the best possible original text of a document, whereas *higher criticism* is the investigation of questions such as the authorship, date, and historicity of the Bible. (Both lower and higher criticism came from the same skeptical cauldron and both have greatly undermined faith in the Holy Scriptures because neither is predicated upon faith.) Eichhorn fearlessly engaged in biblical criticism, claiming that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses as taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles and as traditionally believed by God’s people but was an edited composition of diverse documents and traditions. “This theory was later extended and developed into the Graf-Wellhausen thesis, which sees the whole of the Pentateuch the product of several layers of oral tradition, developed over time and written down long after the events it records are claimed to have occurred” (*Biblical Criticism*, [http://www.christis.org.uk/archive/issue71/biblical\\_criticism.php](http://www.christis.org.uk/archive/issue71/biblical_criticism.php)).

H.E.G. Paulus (1761-1851) of Heidelberg, Germany, devised naturalistic explanations for Christ’s miracles. He claimed, for example, that Jesus did not actually walk on the water but that He was walking on the shore and in the mist and fog it only *appeared* that he was walking on the water. He claimed that Christ did not die on the cross, but only swooned, and in the coolness of the tomb he revived; and after an earthquake moved the stone, he walked out and appeared to the disciples. Of course, that would have been as great a miracle as the resurrection!

Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834) of Halle, Germany, exalted experience and feeling over Bible doctrine. He used traditional Christian language but gave this language new and heretical meaning. He emphasized the necessity of knowing Christ through faith, but by this he did not mean believing the Bible as the historically true and infallible Word of God; he was referring merely to man’s own intuition or consciousness. It was not faith in the Word of God but faith in faith. He did not consider historical biblical truth to be necessary to faith. Thus Schleiermacher could say, “With my intellect I am a philosopher, and with my feelings quite a devout man; ay, more than that, a Christian” (quoted by Daniel Edward, “Schleiermacher Interpreted by Himself and the Men of His School,” *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, Vol. 25, 1876, p. 609). Schleiermacher barred doctrinal preaching from the pulpit (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 2000, p. 11). “Schleiermacher is correctly viewed as the chief source of the

massive change which has occurred in the historic Protestant denominations during the last two hundred years. ... In his separation of the intellectual content of Christianity (the objective biblical revelation) from Christian ‘feeling’, Schleiermacher seemed to provide a means whereby the essence of Christianity could remain unaffected, no matter how much of the Bible was rejected. Hostile criticism of Scripture need not therefore be seen as a threat to the ‘faith’ ... Christianity, it was concluded, could be successful irrespective of whether Scripture were preserved as the Word of God, and this thought was the more appealing as the theological scholarship of the nineteenth century became increasingly destructive” (Murray, p. 11). Schleiermacher paved the way for the New Evangelical view that men can be genuine Christians and “love the Lord,” even though they reject biblical doctrine. For this reason, Billy Graham can have sweet fellowship with modernistic skeptics and Roman Catholic bishops and popes.

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), founder of the Tuebingen (Germany) School of New Testament criticism, claimed that the Gospel of John was not written until 170 A.D. and that only four of Paul’s Epistles were actually written by him. He argued that the New Testament was merely the natural record of the early churches. He taught that Paul preached a spiritual rather than a bodily resurrection and that only after Paul’s day, during the controversy with the Docetists, did the preaching of the bodily resurrection begin. Baur also promoted the doctrine of “organic development,” that “the church as the literal body of Christ on earth progressively apprehended higher truth but was always infallible and authoritative at any point in time” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 9). This doctrine was promoted in America by Phillip Schaff, the chairman of the American Standard Version translation committee. The Tuebingen School was very influential in the spread of modernism.

David F. Strauss (1808-74), a pupil of F.C. Baur, “dismissed all the supernatural and messianic elements in the Gospels as myth.” He boldly denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. His book *Das Leben Jesu* (*The Life of Jesus*) (1835) was very influential. “Strauss’ thesis was that the entire Gospel was one grand parable; a great mass of legends drawn from many sources, even some which had pagan beginnings, applied from motives of hope and benevolence in his followers, to an obscure Galilean prophet who was himself swept up in the scheme unwittingly, all pointing not to the God of Moses and Elijah, cruel and vindictive and even immoral as Strauss and the transcendentalists felt Him to be, but to a higher, man-made, Platonic Deity, who was the beneficiary of the advanced ethics of the 19th century” (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 9). Strauss spiritualized the resurrection. Strauss’s *The Life of Jesus* was translated into English in 1846 by Mary Ann Evans (who went by the pen name of George Eliott), author of *Silas Marner*, “who in the process gave up the

evangelical faith in which she had been reared” (Sightler, p. 9).

John Stuart Mill (1806-73) published his *System of Logic* in 1843, with the claim that the only valid source of information is the physical senses and scientific investigation, thus denouncing faith. Mill had a large influence at Cambridge University and throughout England in the scholarly realm.

The Graf-Wellhausen theory was named for Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-69). (Julius Wellhausen published the *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* in 1878.) According to this theory, the Old Testament is not divine revelation but merely the record of the evolution of Israel’s religion. He held “that Hebrew religion had undergone a development from the primitive stories of nomadic times to the elaborate, institutionalized ritualism of the period of the centuries before the birth of Christ” (*The History of Christianity*, Lion Publishing, 1977, p. 554). Wellhausen denied the historicity of Abraham, Noah, and other Bible characters. He claimed that Israel did not know about Jehovah God until Moses taught them this at Mt. Sinai. He claimed that the laws and the priestly system were not given by Moses but were developed after Israel was in Canaan and, in some cases, after the Babylonian exile; that most of the Pentateuch was written during the days of Israel’s kings as a “pious fraud.” This theory has, in its ever-changing forms, wielded vast influence in theological education in most denominations. (It has also permeated evangelical biblical scholarship since the latter half of the 20th century. For documentation see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VII, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because Evangelical Scholarship Is Unreliable.” See also “Fundamentalism, Modernism, and New Evangelicalism” -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/fundamenl.htm> ).

The ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1878, included essays that were critical of the Bible, making such criticism available generally to English-speaking people for the first time.

e. The Broad Church movement in the Church of England grew until it dominated the scene by the end of the 19th century.

(1) The Broad Church movement made allowance for “new thinking,” particularly the German liberalism. It rejected the doctrine that the Bible is the sole revelation from God and opened itself to human wisdom and philosophy. Dr. James Sightler, in *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation* (pp. 17-18) gives the characteristics of the movement as follows:

(a) First, the doctrine of original sin was denied.

(b) Second, the orthodox satisfaction theory of the atonement was denied and the

moral influence theory substituted in its place, or atonement was ignored and incarnation stressed instead. Broad Church theology saw salvation not in what Christ did but in what He was, therefore not in atonement at all but in incarnation.

- (c) Third, in Christology the Broad Church teaching varied from rarely held orthodoxy, to denial of the eternal Sonship, to subordinationism and Sabellianism, and on over to outright Arianism and Socinianism.
  - (d) Fourth, the virgin birth was denied.
  - (e) Fifth, eternal life was defined as the knowledge of God here and now on earth and did not refer to any supposed life after death. Eternal death or punishment was defined as separation from God.
  - (f) Sixth, Heaven and Hell were not believed to be real places.
  - (g) Seventh, the Resurrection of the Lord and His Ascension were spiritualized and made figurative. The resurrection of believers was also denied.
  - (h) Eighth, the Second Coming of the Lord was taught as having happened in 70 A.D. at the fall of Jerusalem or as occurring at the death of the believer.
  - (i) Ninth, verbal inspiration of the Scripture was denied, and its authority was restricted to matters of faith and practice and then only upon authentication by human reason.
  - (j) Tenth, Christianity was said to be Christ.
  - (k) Eleventh, the incarnation was taught not as the miraculous appearance of God on earth in human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ alone, but as the union of God with all men in the unfolding of human history.
  - (l) Twelfth, Darwin's theory of evolution was accepted.
- (2) A prominent name in this movement was the famous poet and author Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a Unitarian. D. C. Somervell said, "The whole of the Broad Church school of the next generation, in all its varieties, is derivable from Coleridge" (*English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 1929). "It was Coleridge who was responsible, more than any other single individual, for the diffusion of German neology through Cambridge University and thence through the Anglican Church. His books *Biographia Literaria*, *Aids to Reflection*, and *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* had a profound effect on Julius Hare, J.F.D. Maurice, and John Sterling" (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 12). Coleridge rejected the divine inspiration of Scripture, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ, and filtered the Bible's teaching through transcendental philosophy.
- (3) Another prominent name in the Broad Church movement was J.F.D. (Frederick Denison) Maurice, who was expelled from King's College in 1853 for heretical doctrines. Maurice believed that Christ's incarnation "effected a mystical union of Christ with all men, so that all are saved, and the mission of the church is then

simply to tell them so” (Sightler, p. 17).

- (4) By 1853 the Broad Church had gained the allegiance of 3,500 Anglican priests (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 12).
  - (5) In 1861, a volume entitled *Essays and Reviews* promoted higher criticism as held by Broad Church leaders and theologians. The seven authors, led by Benjamin Jowett, denied the virgin birth, deity, vicarious propitiatory atonement, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the supernatural inspiration and miracles of the Bible. “It also created at least as much public alarm as Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* the year before. British scholars made a significant contribution to the critical study of biblical texts from this time onwards, significantly in the establishment of Mark as the earliest Gospel, and the development of the ‘Q’ theory of the synoptic Gospels. Suggesting that both Matthew and Luke drew for their accounts upon that of Mark, as well as another source -- ‘Q’ ... this theory remains substantially accepted today” (*Biblical Criticism*, [http://www.christis.org.uk/archive/issue71/biblical\\_criticism.php](http://www.christis.org.uk/archive/issue71/biblical_criticism.php)). We must quickly note that the so-called “Q” document is a liberal myth.
  - (6) In 1864 the Privy Council of England permitted the seven Broad Church clergymen who attacked the Christian faith in *Essays and Reviews* to retain their position.
  - (7) Many of the members of the English Revised Version translation committee were within the Broad Church movement, including Westcott and Hort, R.C. Trench, J.B. Lightfoot, Edward Henry Bickersteth, Benjamin Kennedy, A.P. Stanley, Charles Ellicott, William Moulton, George Milligan, Robert Payne Smith, William Humphrey, and Charles John Vaughan.
- f. Some general descriptions of what was happening in Europe and England in the days when modern textual criticism was being devised:

The testimony of historian James Good: Rationalism was “a terrible tide” that “swept over Germany like a flood” (James Good, *History of the Reformed Church of Germany 1620-1890*).

The testimony of R.L. Dabney in 1881: “While German scholarship has been busy with its labors, it has suffered almost a whole nation to lapse into a semi-heathenish condition” (“The Influence of the German University System on Theological Education,” *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*).

The testimony of John Newton, who declared in 1801: “I am told there are about ten

thousand parishes in England; I believe more than nine thousand of these are destitute of the gospel” (*Letters and Conversational Remarks by John Newton During the Last Eighteen Years of His Life*, 1809, p. 146).

The testimony of John Berridge, a clergyman in the Church of England: “...there was scarce a clergyman to be found, but who preached contrary to the articles he subscribed” (*Works of John Berridge*, 1838, p. 362).

The testimony of L.W. Munhall: “The unspiritual condition of the churches ... and the alarmingly prevalent skepticism, infidelity, and atheism among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland is, without doubt, almost wholly attributable to the advocacy of these criticisms by a large majority of the prominent pastors and theological professors in those lands. The same condition of affairs is measurably true in England, Scotland, New England, and in every community where this criticism is believed by any very considerable number of people and openly advocated” (L.W. Munhall, *The Highest Critics vs. the Higher Critics*, 1896).

The testimony of Matthew Arnold of conditions in nineteenth-century Britain: “Clergymen and ministers of religion are full of lamentations over what they call the spread of scepticism ... ‘... the speculations of the day are working their way down among the people...’” (*Literature and Dogma*, 1873, p. vi).

The testimony of historian S.M. Houghton: “THE FACT IS THAT GERMANY, BY THE MID-19TH CENTURY, WAS FLOODED BY UNBELIEF. Its schools and colleges, as well as its churches, contributed to this. Its Protestant hymn-book was revised in order to deprive it of much of its evangelical content. PHILOSOPHY REPLACED THEOLOGY, AND SCRIPTURE WAS DEALT WITH SAVAGELY. Miracles ceased to be accounted miracles; they were explained away. Bible prophecies were discredited. Christ was robbed of his deity. His resurrection, it was said, never took place. Either he did not really die but suffered a fainting fit, or he retreated after his supposed death to some place known only to his disciples. D.F. Strauss startled the world by a *Life of Jesus* (published in 1835-36) which admitted a framework of fact, but claimed that much of the content of the Four Gospels was sheer mythology. Julius Wellhausen [1844-1910] achieved notoriety by attacking the orthodox teaching on the authorship, unity and inspiration of the Scriptures, and unhappily many followed in his steps. He was the chief pioneer of Higher Critical views, and under his influence many theologians throughout Western Europe and America questioned or abandoned the authority even of Christ himself” (S.M. Houghton, *Sketches from Church History*, p. 239).

The testimony of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who spent the last years of his life

fighting against the “downgrade” in theology that had undermined the Baptist Union. In 1887 Spurgeon wrote the following haunting words: “A CHASM IS OPENING BETWEEN THE MEN WHO BELIEVE THEIR BIBLES AND THE MEN WHO ARE PREPARED FOR AN ADVANCE UPON SCRIPTURE. ... Those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death. ... Attendance at places of worship is declining and reverence for holy things is vanishing. We solemnly believe this to be largely attributable to THE SCEPTICISM WHICH HAS FLASHED FROM THE PULPIT AND SPREAD AMONG THE PEOPLE” (*Sword and Trowel*, November 1887). Spurgeon thus describes for us the wretched spiritual condition that existed in Britain in his day. End-time apostasy was coming into blossom. Spurgeon’s battles against modernism within the Baptist Union occurred at precisely the same time that the English Revised Version was completed, and the same battle was being fought (and lost) in other denominations, including Anglican, Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist. (An excellent overview of this is found in *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust). Apostasy had effectively prepared the way for the modern text and versions. While there is no evidence that Spurgeon himself understood the association between the two, many other men did. (Spurgeon died in 1892, only a few years after the publication of the English Revised Version.)

The testimony of the Bible League, which was formed in Britain in 1892, described the spread of apostasy from that day until now: “Spurgeon’s days saw apostasy as a trickle; by the time of the Bible League’s foundation [1892] it had become a stream; shortly it expanded to a river, and today it has become a veritable ocean of unbelief. For the most of men the ancient landmarks have disappeared from sight. Life upon earth has become a voyage on an uncharted ocean in a cockle-shell boat ‘tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.’ Never before in human history has the ‘sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive’ (Eph. 4:14) been so greatly in evidence. ‘Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived’ (2 Tim. 3:13)” (“The Bible League: Its Origin and Its Aims,” *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, Abingdon: The Bible League, 1984).

## **2. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when HUMAN PHILOSOPHY was exalting itself against God’s Word.**

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) developed his “critical philosophy,” which taught that human reason is preeminent and which attempted to reconcile Scripture with “the holiest teaching of reason.” Kant denied the supernatural and taught that the



Bible is largely mythical, that Satan represents the evil principle in human nature and Jesus represents the good principle in human nature. He saw a two-part world system, *Phenomena*, the realm of man's senses, and *Noumena*, the realm of the soul, God, and other things beyond human perception and reason. "The liberal theologians were to reason that if the Bible is a revelation from God and therefore part of the *Noumena*, it would not need to be reliable in the area of the *Phenomena*" (Daniel J. Ebert, *Will Our Sons Defend the Faith*, 3rd edition, 1994, p. 33). This was merely another way of denying the miraculous in the Bible.

Georg W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) led the German Idealist movement, turning his back on orthodox Christianity and holding to a type of pantheism. Hegel denied that there is such a thing as absolute truth. He said it is "narrow" and "dogmatic" to assume that of two opposite assertions the one must be true and the other false. Instead, he created a system called *Dialectics*. "In this process there is a merging of opposites to form a new idea or thought. Hegel called the position held the 'Thesis,' and the position opposed to it the 'Antithesis.' The two opposites, after a confrontation, must move toward each other, finally merging. This action of the merging of former opposites is called a 'Dialectic.' The new thought formed by the dialectic is called a 'Synthesis.' The resulting synthesis is not the end to Hegel's process. The new synthesis will then break down into another set of thesis and antithesis and the process will begin again. Hegel claimed to be looking for what he called 'Absolute,' which might be defined as the final or ultimate synthesis" (Ebert, *Will Our Sons Defend the Faith*, 3rd edition, 1994, p. 35).

In 1784 Ethan Allen published *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, which rejected the authority of the Bible.

In 1795 Thomas Paine bitterly assaulted the Bible and Christianity with his book *The Age of Reason*.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) promoted scientific atheism, claiming there are no spiritual agencies in the universe, only facts discoverable by the senses and events that take place according to natural law.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) popularized existentialism in contrast to biblical absolutes, exalting experience over truth. Though little known in his lifetime beyond the borders of his native Denmark, his writings later became influential through translations. Kierkegaard taught that one could experience Christianity as a subjective religion without believing in the infallible historical truth of the Bible. Robert Runcie, who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980 to 1990, said he was indebted to Kierkegaard's idea "that religion had nothing to do with the rational part of your mind." Runcie said this showed him "a way in which I

could hold together a fundamental skepticism with religious devotion” (Humphrey Carpenter, *Robert Runcie: The Reluctant Archbishop*, 1977, p. 88).

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) claimed that God is dead, meaning that God should cease to be reckoned as a force in people’s lives, that they should live life apart from any concern about God. In his book *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), Nietzsche attacked Christianity and democracy as something only for the “weak herd,” calling for a race of supermen to celebrate life on earth by living as they pleased through “the creative use of passion,” rather than entertaining a heavenly hope, and by forcing their will and values upon others. He said, “The most important of more recent events--that ‘God is dead’, that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief--already begins to cast its first shadows over Europe.” In the 1930s and 40s, the Nazis took Nietzsche as their prophet and set out to be his supermen, brutally imposing their will upon Europe.

Robert Ingersoll attacked the Bible and mocked its miracles in lecture tours and in 1879 published *Some Mistakes of Moses*.

### **3. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when UNITARIANISM was making great gains.**

- a. Unitarianism is the modern revival of the ancient heresy of Arianism, which denied the deity of Jesus Christ, claiming that He was a created Being and not the eternal Son of God. Unitarianism is a denial of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, defined by Webster’s 1828 *Dictionary of the English Language* as “the union of three persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) in one Godhead, so that all the three are one God as to substance, but three persons as to individuality.”
- b. Unitarianism began to show itself faintly in the 16th and 17 centuries.
  - (1) Michael Servetus (1511-1563), who was an anabaptist, held some type of Arian views in Switzerland and was put to death by John Calvin’s government in 1553.
  - (2) There were Unitarian congregations in Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania in the 16th century. In Poland they became known as the “Polish Brethren” or the Minor Church. Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) was a prominent leader among the Unitarians there and during his days they drew up a statement of faith called the *Racovian Catechism*. Socinus believed “that there was only God the Father, a single divine being. The Holy Ghost was not a person but a divine force, not God and not coequal to the Father. Jesus Christ was an exceptional man without sin, but not divine. Salvation required a holy life after the example of the man, Jesus

Christ” (<http://www.exlibris.org/nonconform/engdis/socinians.html>). Because of Socinus’ leadership in the movement, the name “Socinianism” came to be associated with this heresy.

- (3) Unitarianism showed itself faintly in England in the 17th century after the Civil War. John Biddle (1615-1662) is considered the founder, but it did not spread until later.
- c. In the late 18th century and into the 19th Unitarianism began to increase in England because of the “rationalistic atmosphere” and the spiritual weakness of the churches.
  - (1) Book publisher Joseph Johnson (1758-1809) helped establish the foundation for Unitarianism and theological rationalism in England and America.
    - (a) He published the works of Joseph Priestly, William Wordsworth, William Beckford, Richard Price, Theophilus Lindsey, William Godwin, Thomas Paine, John Horne Tooke, Samuel T. Coleridge, and other Unitarians and “free thinkers.”
    - (b) In May 1788, Johnson began publication of the *Analytical Review*, edited by Unitarian Thomas Christie. “The review stood in the forefront of libertarianism. It espoused political and social ideologies sympathetic to the French Revolution, opposed the slave trade, encouraged parliamentary reform, supported religious toleration for Catholics and Unitarians, and acquainted readers with Continental literature, especially from Germany, which, until the end of the eighteenth century, was relatively unknown in England” (Gerald Tyson, “Joseph Johnson, an Eighteenth-Century Bookseller,” *Studies in Bibliography*, edited by Fredson Bowers, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1975, Vol. 28). The *Analytical Review* ceased publication in 1799, but it had an influence among British intellectuals. Walter Graham in *English Literary Periodicals* calls it “unquestionably one of the most important periodical sources for the student of the late eighteenth century.”
    - (c) Johnson’s shop and apartment at No. 72 St. Paul’s Churchyard “were a center for the exchange of news and ideas during the American and French revolutions, since his circle of writers was, with but few exceptions, sympathetic to various kinds of social and political reform” (Tyson, “Joseph Johnson, an Eighteenth-Century Bookseller”). Around the corner from the bookshop was The London Coffee House, where the likes of Benjamin Franklin of America congregated.
    - (d) Johnson “negotiated the rental of an unused auction hall in Essex Street for the first Unitarian Chapel, appearing in person before the Westminster justices and petitioning them for a license to permit Dissenting worship” (Tyson).

- (e) Johnson's last act of support for the Unitarians occurred the year before his death when he turned over to them the copyright that he held for William Newcome's translation of the Bible so it could be used as the basis for a Unitarian version (Thomas Belsham, *Memoirs of the Late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey*, 1812, p. 101). Newcome's translation was desired because it was based on Griesbach's Greek New Testament.
- (2) In 1756, a Unitarian named Newcome Cappe was appointed minister of the Presbyterian St. Saviourgate Chapel in York. The appointment was made by the trustees in opposition to at least part of the congregation. The chapel eventually became completely Unitarian. Charles Wellbeloved, principal of Manchester College (Oxford University), was minister of the chapel from 1801 to 1858. He had been Cappel's assistant beginning in 1792. Another minister of this chapel, George Vance Smith, was on the English Revised Version translation committee. In 1859-62, Smith, Wellbeloved, and John Scott Piper published *The Holy Scriptures of the Old Covenant in a revised translation* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts).
- (3) High Street Chapel in Shrewsbury was one of the many British churches infected with unitarianism by the 18th century. This is the church where Charles Darwin (1809-1882) received his early religious training. The chapel was first built in 1691 by Francis Tallents and John Bryan, dissenters from the Church of England, but it took a turn to unitarianism with the appointment of Job Orton (1717-83), who was the minister at High Street from 1741-65 ("The Down Grade - Part 2," *The Sword and the Trowel*, April 1887, p. 14). Though "many of his sentiments were sound and good," he "was not considered fully orthodox." That Orton did not hold to the full Godhead of Jesus Christ is evident by his comment on the name "The mighty God" in Isaiah 9:6. He said, "The meaning of this I cannot tell." Orton's successors at High Street went further in their unbelief, denying the infallible inspiration of Scripture and the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. By Charles Darwin's day the High Street Chapel was a full-blown Unitarian congregation and George A. Case was the pastor (from 1797 to his death in 1831). Today the church is called Shrewsbury Unitarian Church, High Street, and a plaque inside the building says: "To the memory of Charles Robert Darwin, author of 'The Origin of the Species,' born in Shrewsbury, February 12, 1809, in early life a member of and a constant worshipper in this church." Charles Darwin's mother, Susannah, was a Unitarian, and Charles was educated for a short period at a school operated by the Unitarian minister George Case. Charles Darwin's wife, Emma Wedgwood, was also a Unitarian. A biographer of Darwin speaks of "the vein of skepticism in the Darwin family" (John Wehler, *Charles Darwin: Growing up in Shewsbury 1809-25*). Thus, Darwinism was a product of end-time theological apostasy.

- (4) Essex Chapel in London is called “the first self-styled Unitarian congregation” in England. It was founded in 1773 by Theophilus Lindsey, who had left the Church of England.
- (5) The British and Foreign Unitarian Society was founded in 1825 and was influential in spreading this heresy.
- (6) Some of the names of influential Unitarians in England in those days were Joseph Priestley, Thomas Belsham, and James Martineau. Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, influenced many in the unbelieving path of Unitarianism.
- (7) By 1831, only 22 years after its founding, the British & Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) was infected with Unitarianism. In that year a group of men within the BFBS attempted to have the Society adopt a Trinitarian policy “to ensure that Unitarians denying the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ could not be admitted to membership or hold office in the Society” (*TBS Quarterly Record*, No. 475, April-June 1981, p. 3). After a “prolonged and heated debate in Exeter Hall in the Strand, London, at the Annual Meeting, the motion was rejected by a large majority.” As a result, the Trinitarian Bible Society was formed on Dec. 7, 1831, by men who were concerned about doctrinal purity. This shows the dramatic progress that Unitarianism had made in gaining acceptance in Britain in the early part of the 19th century.
- (8) Large numbers of the English Presbyterian and General Baptist (non-Calvinistic) churches were infected with Unitarian heresy.
- (9) Unitarian John Relly Beard (1800-1876) “led the way to modern dictionaries of the Bible” with his *People’s Dictionary of the Bible* in 1847. “Beard was also a crusading Unitarian propagandist who preached widely and wrote extensively. A compiler, a populariser, and a translator, he put into simple terms religious and doctrinal developments in England, France, and Germany. Between 1826 and 1876 he wrote or translated thirty-eight works on religion and theology. ... In 1861 he was the joint founder of the *Unitarian Herald*, of which he was also sometimes joint editor. ... In 1854, in association with William Gaskell, Beard established the Unitarian Home Missionary Board for the training of young ministers who would organize new Unitarian churches in Britain” (Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography, <http://www.uua.org/uuhs/duub/articles/johnrellybeard.html>). Beard was influential in the push for secular public education in Britain.
- (10) As the 19th century progressed many of the Unitarians in England adopted other heresies, denying the infallible inspiration of Scripture, denying the fallen nature of man, becoming more skeptical and more aligned with theological

modernism and philosophy. "... in the 1830s James Martineau and some younger Unitarians led a revolt against biblical Unitarianism and its dogmas. ... They found religious authority in reason and conscience, rather than in a biased interpretation of Scripture. Henceforth the Unitarians were rather sharply divided into an older, 'biblical', and newer, 'spiritual', wing. The new group was well on the way to eclipsing the 'biblical' wing by 1850" (Lion's *History of Christianity*, p. 505).

- (11) A prominent Unitarian in England was the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, author of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Kahn*. A close friend of the American poet William Wordsworth, Coleridge was a Unitarian from his childhood. In his student years at Cambridge he gravitated toward Joseph Priestley's circle of friends, and he imbibed German rationalism while studying in Germany in 1798. In 1825, Coleridge wrote, "... a high German Transcendentalist I must be content to remain" (Coleridge, *Letters*, Vol. II, pp. 735-6). "It was Coleridge who was responsible, more than any other single individual, for the diffusion of German neology through Cambridge University and thence through the Anglican Church. His books *Biographia Literaria*, *Aids to Reflection*, and *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit* had a profound effect on Julius Hare, J.F.D. Maurice, and John Sterling. Coleridge and Maurice may be said to be the founders of that section of the church known as the Broad Church or Latitudinarian party, which by 1853 had gained the allegiance of 3500 Anglican priests. According to D. C. Somervell, in his book *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (1929), 'The whole of the Broad Church school of the next generation, in all its varieties, is derivable from Coleridge'" (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 12).

- (a) Coleridge exalted human reason as the foundation of Christian belief rather than Scripture.
- (b) Coleridge rejected the divine inspiration of Scripture, saying, for example, that David's psalms were inspired in the same sense as Coleridge's own poems and rejected the doctrine that God gave David the words as "a superhuman ventriloquist" (E.S. Shaffer, *Kubla Khan and the Fall of Jerusalem*, p. 77).
- (c) He spoke of "a Holy Spirit" rather than "the Holy Spirit" (H.N. Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, p. 319).
- (d) He spoke of the virgin birth as "an excrescence of faith" which should be discarded (J.H. Rigg, *Modern Anglican Theology*, p. 309).
- (e) He rejected the biblical doctrine of eternal suffering.
- (f) He conjectured that Christ might "be the World as revealed to human knowledge--a kind of common sensorium, the idea of the whole that modifies all our thoughts" (quoted by Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, p. 325).

d. In America, Unitarianism arose in the late 18th century and spread in the early 19th.

- (1) The first Unitarian church in America was King's Chapel in Boston, which had been the first Anglican congregation in America. Under the leadership of James Freeman in 1785 the church voted to adopt Unitarianism.
- (2) William Bentley, pastor of East Church in Salem, Massachusetts, accepted Unitarianism through the influence of William Hazlitt, an associate of Joseph Priestley. Hazlitt came to America in 1784 and "remained in New England for several years distributing literature, preaching, and disputing with numerous orthodox ministers" (*The Diary of William Bentley*, cited by James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 10). Bentley, an assistant to the pastor, persuaded the congregation to overthrow the pastor and install himself in his place. He then led the church into Unitarianism. Several of Bentley's members "were captains of sailing ships and brought back theological works from Europe along with their cargoes" (Sightler, p. 10).
- (3) Joseph Priestley moved to America in 1794 and wielded a significant influence on American churches, particularly in the Northeast.
- (4) By 1800, one-third of the Congregational churches in Boston had become Unitarian.
- (5) In 1805 Unitarians took control of Harvard College with the appointment of Henry Ware to the Chair of Divinity. The aforementioned James Freeman and William Bentley, who were graduates of Harvard, "played an important role in the movement of Harvard toward Unitarianism" (Sightler, p. 10). The divinity school was established at Harvard in 1816 and "became the centre of Unitarian thought."
- (6) In 1819 influential Presbyterian pastor William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) publicly espoused Unitarianism in a sermon titled "Unitarian Christianity," also called the "Baltimore Sermon." Channing was minister of Federal Street Congregational Church in Boston, but his sermon was preached in the First Independent Church of Baltimore on the occasion of an ordination. Channing urged his listeners to keep their minds free from external authorities and to inquire more of "the oracle within."
- (7) In 1825 the Unitarian congregations organized themselves into the American Unitarian Association, with its headquarters in Boston.
- (8) In 1837 the Unitarian Horace Mann (1796-1859) was elected Secretary to the

Massachusetts Board of Education and took a prominent position in the secularization of education in America. Mann falsely believed in the perfectibility of humanity and society through universal public education. He believed children in public schools should be taught the ethics of Christianity without its doctrines, which was a stepping stone to the complete divorce of public education from religion and morality.

- (9) As in England, the American Unitarians became increasingly skeptical and anti-supernatural as the 19th century progressed. They preferred terms such as *transcendentalism* and *anti-supernaturalism*. In about 1819 William Channing “became the spokesman and the new leader of the Unitarians. In his sermons and writings he enunciated three principles of the greatest importance: God is all-loving and all pervading; the presence of this God in all men makes them divine, and the true worship of God is good will to all men” (*Unitarianism and Transcendentalism*, <http://lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/unitarian.html>).
- (10) Some of them, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, formed a religious philosophy that attempted to synthesize pagan religions such as Hinduism, Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism, with Christianity.
  - (a) Emerson was the Unitarian pastor of Second Baptist Church in Boston and following the death of his first wife he began an intense study of the aforementioned religions, “not in order to identify the superior credentials of one religion over another, but in order to develop their own religious thoughts and practices” (Christopher Walton, *Unitarianism and Early American Interest in Hinduism*, 1999, <http://www.philocrites.com/essays/hinduism.html>).
  - (b) Emerson frequently quoted from Hindu writings such as the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavata Purana*.
  - (c) In July 1842, Emerson wrote: “Each nation has its bible more or less pure; none has yet been willing or able in a wise and devout spirit to collate its own with those of other nations, and sinking the civil-historical and ritual portions to bring together the grand expressions of the moral sentiment in different ages and races, the rules for the guidance of life, the bursts of piety and of abandonment to the Invisible and Eternal;--a work inevitable sooner or later, and which we hope is to be done by religion and not by literature” (Emerson, *The Dial*, July 1842; quoted in R. K. Dhawan, *Henry David Thoreau, a Study in Indian Influence*, 1985, pp. 27-28; *The Dial* was a transcendentalist periodical that featured extracts from non-Christian religions).
  - (d) In his 1841 essay “The Over-Soul,” Emerson wrote: “...within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One. ... there is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins” (Emerson,



*The Over-Soul*). Thus, Emerson taught that man's soul is God and God is man's soul.

- (e) In his message to the Phi Beta Kappa society at Harvard in 1837, entitled "The American Scholar," Emerson exhorted scholars to free themselves of tradition (such as the Bible) and to maintain a "self-trust."

- (11) Another influential Unitarian in America was Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), author of *On Walden Pond*, who said in his *Journal*, "I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot." He denied the Fall and the New Birth and the Saviour and sought for "truth" instead through communion with nature, study of eclectic philosophies, and reflection.

e. UNITARIANISM HAD A STRONG INFLUENCE ON MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES.

- (1) The Unitarians loved the critical Greek text from the days of German modernist Johann Griesbach onward. Prominent Unitarian leader Joseph Priestly attempted to publish a new English version based on the Greek text of Griesbach, and the project was well advanced when the manuscript was destroyed in a fire in 1791. Priestly's successor, Thomas Belsham, continued to make this project his primary objective.
- (2) When the Unitarian Book Society was formed, a major objective was the translation of a new English version based on the Griesbach critical text. Abandoning this plan, it published in 1808 an "improved" edition of the 1796 translation by William Newcome of Ireland "chiefly because it followed Griesbach's text" (Earl Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America*, 1952, p. 339; see also P. Marion Simms, *The Bible in America*, pp. 255-258). The complete title was "The New Testament, An improved version upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new translation with a corrected text and notes critical and explanatory." It was published in London by Richard Taylor & Co., in 1808, and in America by William Wells of Boston, in 1809. This publication "drew the fire of the orthodox by omitting as late interpolations several passages traditionally cited as pillars of Trinitarian doctrine," such as "God" in 1 Tim. 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7.
- (3) By 1857 the state church of Holland was deeply infiltrated by Unitarians and they revised the Dutch Bible on the basis of modern textual criticism. The following appeared in a Dutch Reformed paper in America: "The National Church of Holland, the descendant of the Old Reformed Church of Dort, has, it is true, still its old orthodox standards; but by additional regulations the Synod has deprived them of their binding power, in consequence of which Rationalism

and Unitarianism have, in the course of the last fifty years, seized almost the whole of the clergy. The Synod recently by an official verdict virtually declared, that ministers who hold Unitarians views are legal office-bearers of the Church. OF HER 1500 MINISTERS, NOT MORE THAN A HUNDRED ARE KNOWN AS MAINTAINING EVANGELICAL TRUTH; AND THE SYNOD HAS RESOLVED TO PUBLISH A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE, which (as the committee and TRANSLATORS CONSIST, ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION, OF UNITARIANS) will doubtless favor their views--and thus the faith of the people, sustained by the old Dutch translation, one of the best in Europe, will be still further undermined" (quoted from Arthur Cleveland Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible*, 1857, p. 18).

- (4) In 1869 the American Unitarian Association of Boston published *The New Testament, translated from the Greek text of Tischendorf*, edited by George R. Noyes.
- (5) Many of the prominent early textual critics were Unitarians, including Daniel Mace (1685-1753), Johann Wettstein (1693-1754), Alexander Geddes (1737-1802), Edward Harwood (1729-94), George Vance Smith (1816-1902), Ezra Abbot (1819-84), Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), and Caspar Rene Gregory (1846-1917).
- (6) Consider the testimony of the American Standard Version translation committee upon the death of committee member Ezra Abbot on March 21, 1884. The following excerpt from a memorial resolution issued by the committee is clear evidence of this Unitarian's influence on the Revision work on both sides of the ocean: "Always one of the first in his place at the table, and one of the last to quit it, he [Ezra Abbot] brought with him thither the results of careful preparation. HIS SUGGESTIONS WERE SELDOM THE PROMPTINGS OF THE MOMENT. HENCE THEY ALWAYS COMMANDED CONSIDERATION; OFTEN SECURED INSTANT ADOPTION. ... BUT IT WAS IN QUESTIONS AFFECTING THE GREEK TEXT THAT DR. ABBOT'S EXCEPTIONAL GIFTS AND ATTAINMENTS WERE PRE-EMINENTLY HELPFUL. Several of his essays on debated passages, appended to the printed reports of our proceedings which were forwarded from time to time to the brethren in England, are among the most thorough discussions of the sort which are extant, won immediate respect for American scholarship in this department, and HAD NO SMALL INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING THAT FORM OF THE SACRED TEXT WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY, WE BELIEVE, FIND ACCEPTANCE WITH ALL CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS" (*Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revision*, 1885, p. 68). Here is the plain admission that the critical Greek text owes much to Unitarians.

- (7) It is important to note that Bible believers of that day did not accept the modern critical Greek text and many critiques were published to refute the theories of textual criticism. The eager acceptance of the critical text was limited in that day largely to theological modernists and Unitarians.

#### **4. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when COMMUNISM was rising.**

- a. In the late 1700s, Adam Smith transformed economics into an academic matter with his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith's followers became increasingly radical as the years passed, "gravitating more and more toward socialism" and striving for state ownership of the economy.
- b. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels published the *Communist Manifesto* in London in January 1848. Socialist organizations began to proliferate across the world. "Marx took Hegel's idea of change through confrontation and accommodation and placed it in the material world. This gives us the basic communist idea of change through destruction and reorganization. Communism thrives on turmoil because, to their way of thinking, anything which upsets order is an aid in movement toward their ultimate synthesis. In communism, the ruling class is the thesis, the working class the antithesis, and the ultimate synthesis will be a state controlled by the people living in complete equality. ... Many Christians have been amazed at the sympathy and comradeship liberal theologians feel for the godless communist movement. But it is not really surprising since they are both, in different areas of life, searching by the same methods for the same end" (Daniel J. Ebert, *Will Our Sons Defend the Faith*, 3rd edition, 1994, p. 36).
- c. In fact, in 1848 over 50 violent attempts took place to topple established governments (James Webb, *The Occult Underground*, 1974, p. 7).
- d. In 1884 the Fabian Society was formed by a group of British socialists. Textual critics Westcott and Hort were both involved with this type of activity. Hort wrote of a "deep hatred of democracy in all its forms" and had no objection "to a limit being placed by the State upon the amount of property which any one person may possess." He viewed the co-operative principle to be "better and mightier than the competitive principle." Foreshadowing the long history of anti-Americanism on the part of socialists and communists, Hort said, "... the American empire is a standing menace to the whole civilization of Europe ... it cannot be wrong to desire and pray from the bottom of one's heart that the American Union may be shivered to pieces."
- e. By 1917, communist revolutionaries had gained control of the Russian Empire and were well on their way to dominating and brutalizing a large portion of the world.

**5. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when EVOLUTION was developing.**

- a. An evolutionary concept of geology began to be promoted in the 1830s by Charles Lyell.
- b. Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) *The Origin of the Species*, in 1859, applied evolution to the creatures in the world.
  - (1) In the first edition Darwin did not reject the concept of a Creator. At the end of the book, in fact, he wrote: "I believe that animals have descended ... into which life was first breathed by the Creator. ... The living power of God, in all the forces of Nature, is indispensable as ever. Without that the world stagnates in a moment, as the wide ocean would freeze to motionless ice were the sun to strike no more his rays upon the dancing wave" (quoted from David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 661).
  - (2) In the 1871 sequel, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin was more openly agnostic in relation to the God of the Bible. The Bible twice warns, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9).
  - (3) As we have seen, the church of which Darwin was a member in his youth developed Unitarian tendencies beginning with the appointment of Job Orton as minister in 1741.
  - (4) Karl Marx declared that Darwinism was the biological basis for communism.
- c. Thomas Huxley (1825-1893) joined his voice with Darwin in mocking biblical creation with *Zoological Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863) and *The Physical Basis of Life* (1868). It was Huxley who coined the term "agnostic" to describe the state of not knowing whether there is a God.
- d. Great numbers of Anglicans looked with various degrees of favor upon the new thinking, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederic Temple. Textual critics Westcott and Hort both were sympathetic to evolutionary thought. One of Anglicanism's crown jewel universities, Cambridge, conferred an honorary doctorate upon Darwin.
- e. When Charles Darwin died in 1882, he was honored by the Church of England by being buried in Westminster Abbey. The general committee members for his memorial fund included the archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishop of London. The tomb is located only a few meters from the entrance to the Jerusalem Chamber, where Westcott and Hort had foisted their critical Greek New Testament

upon the translation committee in the years just preceding Darwin's death.

**6. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was an hour when HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY was developing.**

- a. In 1855 Alexander Bain published the first psychological textbook, *The Senses and the Intellect*.
- b. In 1879 Wilhelm Wundt established the first psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in Germany and Lightner Witmer used the term clinical psychology for the first time.
- c. In 1881 Max Friedrich became the recipient of first doctoral degree in experimental psychology.
- d. In 1883 the first laboratory of psychology in America was established at Johns Hopkins University.
- e. 1884 John Dewey published *The New Psychology*.
- f. In 1885 the first laboratory of psychology in Italy was established at the University of Rome.
- g. In 1889 the first International Congress of Psychology was held.
- h. In 1892 the American Psychological Association was founded.
- i. In 1895 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud published *Studies on Hysteria*. Freud named his system "psychoanalysis" and opened the door for the sexual revolution of the 20th century, teaching that when man acts upon his innate desires it is not sinful but natural. Freud once stated, "The only unnatural sexual behavior is none at all." Psychology almost destroyed the biblical concept of personal accountability, resulting in incalculable harm to Western society.

**7. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was an hour when heretical Christian CULTS were blossoming.**

**a. MORMONISM**

- (1) Joseph Smith published *The Book of Mormon* in March 1830. This contained an alleged revelation from ancient "golden plates" that an angel named Moroni had shown to Smith and that he had translated with a pair of mystical glasses.

- (2) On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and five other men established the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).
- (3) Smith taught that God is an exalted man and that men can become gods; that Adam was God who came from heaven with one of his heavenly wives; that Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers; that Jesus became God through obedience; that Jesus married and had children. Smith taught salvation by works; that there are three different heavens; and that only Mormons go to the highest heaven.
- (4) In spite of its strange doctrines and dubious history, the Mormon Church grew quickly; and following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, it established its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, and spread throughout the world under the direction of Brigham Young.

**b. SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM**

- (1) According to a prophecy by a man named William Miller, Christ was supposed to return to earth in October 1844.
- (2) When this did not happen, a 17-year-old girl named Ellen Harmon prophesied that God was raising up a special people to preach in the last days about sabbath keeping. She claimed that Christ had entered the holy of holies in Heaven in October 1844 and begun an “investigative judgment” of the records of professing believers, to determine if they would be saved or lost.
- (3) Ellen Harmon married James White in August 1846 and they became the leaders of the new movement, calling themselves Seventh-day Adventists. Ellen White, who was accepted as a prophetess of God, claimed to have received 2,000 visions and dreams between 1844 and 1915. These were published in fifty-four books.
- (4) Ellen White taught that Sunday worship is the mark of the antichrist and that God requires Christians to keep the sabbath. She taught the false doctrine of soul sleep, that the dead remain unconscious in the grave until the resurrection. She taught the false doctrine of annihilation, that the unsaved will be burned up and will not suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire.

**c. JEHOVAH’S WITNESS**

- (1) In 1876 Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) began publication of *Zion’s Watchtower*. In 1884 he organized the Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society, the forerunner to the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

- (2) He gave many prophecies about the coming of Christ, but even though the prophecies turned out to be false he had a large following.
- (3) The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity, claiming that God's only name is Jehovah and that Jesus is a created being. They claim that Jesus was Michael the Archangel before he came to earth. They deny that Jesus is God and also deny that he rose from the dead bodily. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, salvation is by faith plus works. The Jehovah's Witnesses also deny eternal punishment in hell. According to Jehovah's Witness theology, only a few believers go to Heaven.
- (4) Prior to the publication of their own English translation in 1961, the Jehovah's Witnesses adopted the American Standard Version. It is a simple matter to find the reason for this. The Unitarians associated with the ASV project, such as Ezra Abbot and J. Henry Thayer (who was secretary of the New Testament Committee), held the same view of Christ as the Jehovah's Witnesses. And the critical Greek text underlying the ASV weakened key passages touching Christ's deity. A footnote at John 9:38, where the man worshipped Christ, says, "The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (AS HERE) or to the Creator..." This is from an edition of the American Standard Version printed by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in about 1929. The Jehovah's Witnesses also publish the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament.

#### **d. SPIRITUALISM**

- (1) In 1848 Kate and Margaret Fox claimed the ability to communicate with the dead, "beginning a spiritualist séance craze in America." By 1861 there were an estimated 100 mediums in New York City alone. Séances were also in vogue in England and Europe. By the 1860s there were four successful periodicals dedicated to spiritualism in England.
- (2) In 1861 President Lincoln attended spiritualist séances in Georgetown and received advice from the famous medium Nettie Colburn Maynard in the White House.

#### **e. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE**

- (1) In 1875 Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) published *Science and Health* and in 1883 she published its sequel, *Key to the Scriptures*. These were merged into her textbook *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which she claimed was a revelation from God.
- (2) In 1879 she founded The Church of Christ, Scientist and it grew quickly until the

first quarter of the 20th century. By the 1930s, it was estimated that the membership was 350,000 and that branches had extended to 50 countries.

- (3) Chronically ill, Mary Baker Eddy was powerfully influenced by mental healer Phineas P. Quimby (1802-1866). Quimby believed that illness and disease could be cured through positive thoughts. Mary Baker Eddy claimed that Quimby cured her. After his death in 1866 she even claimed that she was visited by his ghost.
- (4) Mary Baker Eddy took Quimby's teaching a step further by claiming that sickness and death are not real. Instead of doctors and medicine, Christian Scientists use "Practitioners." These are people trained in Christian Science teaching who help the sick person see through the "false reality of illness."
- (5) Mary Baker Eddy's "Scientific Statement of Being" is read every week in every Christian Science congregation. "There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."
- (6) Christian Science denies the fall of man, the incarnation and blood atonement of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection, the Trinity, Hell, and many other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. Christian Science claims that the Bible is full of mistakes and that it cannot be understood properly apart from Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.

#### f. THEOSOPHY

- (1) Some highlights of the Theosophical movement in the 19th century were as follows:
  - (a) The Theosophical Society was founded in New York City in November 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), Henry S. Olcott, and William Q. Judge. Blavatsky has been called "the mother of the New Age."
  - (b) Her first major work, *Isis Unveiled*, was published in 1877. Isis was an ancient pagan goddess.
  - (c) The *Theosophist* magazine was launched in 1879.
  - (d) In 1885 Blavatsky was forced to leave India "having been accused of faking materializations of teachings from her Masters."
  - (e) Blavatsky's magazine *Lucifer* was established in 1887.
- (f) Blavatsky's 1,500-page *The Secret Doctrine*, called her "master work," was



published in 1888.

- (g) During Blavatsky's lifetime, Theosophy spread to America, India, Sri Lanka, England, and elsewhere.

(2) Theosophy means "divine wisdom."

- (a) It is an amalgamation of ancient pagan philosophy and Eastern religion that Blavatsky picked up on her travels to India, Tibet, Egypt, and elsewhere. She said, "The chief aim of the...Theosophical Society [is] to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities."
- (b) Blavatsky taught that man is God. "We assert that the divine spark in man being one and identical in its essence with the Universal Spirit, our 'spiritual Self' is practically omniscient, but that it cannot manifest its knowledge owing to the impediments of matter" (Blavatsky). Unitarians such as Ralph Waldo Emerson believed the same thing. Emerson called this the "Oversoul," the unity of all human souls into God.
- (c) Blavatsky believed in karma, reincarnation, and other things that she picked up from Eastern religions.
- (d) One of the goals of Theosophy is to "form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color."

#### **g. UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY**

- (1) This movement was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in 1889 and originally was called Modern Thought. The Fillmores studied Spiritualism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian Science, New Thought, Rosicrucianism, Theosophy, and other religions and philosophies, amalgamating these into their own cult.
- (2) In 1895 the name was changed to Unity and since 1914 it has been known as the Unity School of Christianity.

#### **8. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when FEMINISM was rising.**

- a. In 1853 Antoinette Brown became the first woman formally ordained as a minister in the United States, in direct rebellion to the apostolic faith.
- b. In 1895 Elizabeth Stanton's *Woman's Bible* repudiated the Scripture's teaching on the woman's position in the created order.

#### **9. The time when modern textual criticism was devised was a time when ROMAN**

## **CATHOLICISM was making new advances.**

- a. In 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Dogma of Immaculate Conception, teaching that Mary was born sinless.
- b. In 1870 Pope Pius IX summoned the first Vatican Council, which decreed that the Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra* (“from the throne”), referring to the blasphemous Roman claim that the Pope is a spiritual ruler who has the authority to define doctrine.
- c. Romanism was sweeping through England on the back of THE OXFORD MOVEMENT (so called because its leaders were associated with Oxford University) in the 19th century.
  - (1) The beginning of the Oxford Movement is dated July 14, 1833, with a sermon preached by John Keble at St. Mary the Virgin Church, the university church at Oxford.
  - (2) John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, and John Henry Newman began writing *Tracts for These Times* in 1833 to promote a Catholicized Anglicanism. Thus the movement was also named *TRACTARIANISM*.
  - (3) John Newman (1801-90) was Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin Church from 1828-43.
    - (a) It is said that “undergraduates flocked to his sermons.” The poet Matthew Arnold described it 40 years later: “Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary’s, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious movement, subtle, sweet, mournful?” (*The University Church of St. Mary the Virgin*, A Pitkin Guide, 1992, p. 5). What Arnold did not say is that “the charm” of Newman’s preaching was its tantalizing heresy.
    - (b) Newman eventually joined the Catholic Church and became a Cardinal.
  - (4) The sentiment and goal of the Oxford Movement is evident from the following quotes from influential papers of those times:
    - (a) A voice for the Tractarian Movement, the *Union Review*, stated: “The work going on in England is an earnest and carefully organized attempt on the part of a rapidly increasing body of priests and laymen, to bring our Church and country up to the full standard of Catholic faith and practice, and EVENTUALLY TO PLEAD FOR HER UNION WITH [ROME]” (*Union*

*Review*, 1867, p. 412).

- (b) Another organ for this movement said: “Justification by faith, the most immoral of Protestant dogmas, has run its tether, and happily died of self-strangulation” (*Church News*, Nov. 1867).
- (5) Edward Bouverie Pusey joined the movement in 1841 and was so influential that its followers were called Puseyites.
- (6) Though the movement was resisted by many within the Church of England, its influence was widespread.
  - (a) Several hundred Anglican clergy had joined the Roman Catholic Church by 1845, and a large number of those who remained were “Anglo-Catholics.”
  - (b) In 1840 there were not 500 Roman priests in England; by 1890 there were 2,600 (H.G. Guinness, *Romanism and the Reformation*, 1891, pp. 2-3).
  - (c) In 1840 there were only 16 Catholic convents; by 1890 there were over 400 convents with more than 15,000 nuns (Guinness).
  - (d) In 1840 there were only two colleges in England for training Catholic priests; by 1890 there were 29 (Guinness).
- (7) Consider the testimony of historian J.A. Froude, who wrote in great detail of the wretched spiritual climate in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Froude’s father was an Anglican parish minister, and an older brother, Richard Hurrell Froude, joined the Oxford Movement and wrote one of the *Tracts for these Times* which popularized the movement. Thus J.A. Froude was in a position to have first-hand information about the religious situation in England at that hour. He testified that the twin evils of Rationalism and Romanism had devastated the Church of England. “Now, while one set of men were bringing back medievalism, science and criticism were assailing with impunity the authority of the Bible; miracles were declared impossible; even Theism itself was treated as an open question. ... Both these movements [Romanism and Rationalism] began within a short distance of one another, and were evidently connected. ... there is scarcely a clergyman in the country who does not carry upon him in one form or other the marks of the Tractarian movement. ... The Church of England has not only admitted Catholic doctrine but has rushed into it with extraordinary enthusiasm” (Froude, *Short Studies about Great Subjects*, 1883, pp. 163, 164, 218).
- (8) In the context of the Romanizing influences which were sweeping through nineteenth-century Britain, we do not believe it is unimportant to note that many of the readings preferred by Westcott and Hort and the revisers of 1881 were those that had appeared in Catholic Bibles for centuries and that had previously been condemned as corrupt by Protestants. After a careful examination of all of the various readings introduced by the Westcott-Hort text, Andrew Edgar (who

worked on the revision committee) testified: “IT IS CERTAINLY A REMARKABLE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT SO MANY OF THE CATHOLIC READINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IN REFORMATION AND EARLY POST-REFORMATION TIMES WERE DENOUNCED BY PROTESTANTS AS CORRUPTIONS OF THE PURE TEXT OF GOD’S WORD, SHOULD NOW, IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, BE ADOPTED BY THE REVISERS OF OUR TIME-HONOURED ENGLISH BIBLES. ... We have seen that in a large number of cases in which the revisers have departed from the text believed to underlie the authorised version of the New Testament they have adopted readings that Catholics have all along maintained to be the true letter of Scripture” (Edgar, *The Bibles of England*, 1889, pp. 347, 70, 76). Edgar, while finding this fact interesting enough to note in his book, didn’t see a serious problem with it. We do. One of those “Catholic readings” was the omission of “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16.

The previous information is only the “tip of the iceberg.” We have merely touched on a few of the high points of the apostasy of the past 200 years, and it is in the midst of and in the context of this end-time apostasy that the unscriptural theories of modern textual criticism were developed and have gained favor and the modern English versions have appeared to challenge the King James Bible. The book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* features extensive documentation of the apostasy that blossomed in the 20th century as modern textual criticism won the field.

## **HAVING LOOKED AT THE APOSTASY OF THE TIMES IN GENERAL, WE WILL NOW LOOK AT THE APOSTASY OF SOME OF THE INFLUENTIAL TEXTUAL CRITICS AND MODERN VERSION TRANSLATORS.**

Note: The following is a brief sample of the rationalism that has characterized the field of modern textual criticism and the modern versions. For a much more extensive look at this see the companion volume “The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame.” In this book we examine men and versions that are not included in the following abbreviated study, including John Mill, Daniel Mace, Richard Bentley, Johann Bengel, Johann Wettstein, Alexander Geddes, Edward Harwood, Johann Hug, Johannes Scholz, Alexander Campbell, Karl Lachmann, Connop Thirlwall, Samuel Tregelles, Bernhard Weiss, William Moulton, Charles Briggs, William Sanday, Francis Brown, Adolf von Harnack, James Rendel Harris, Henry Vedder, Frederick Conybeare, George Milligan, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the critical text, Francis Burkitt, Ernst von Dobschutz, Henry Wheeler Robinson, Kirsopp Lake, Alexander Souter, Charles H. Dodd, the Revised Standard Version, Kenneth Clark, Ernest Colwell, Gunther Zuntz, J.B. Phillips. William Barclay, Theodore Skeat, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, George Ladd, Robert Grant, Kenneth Taylor and the Living Bible, Reginald Fuller, James Keith Elliott, Sakae Kubo, Eldon Jay Epp, Robert Bratcher, Today’s English Version, Contemporary English Version, Inclusive Language NIV, Gordon Fee, Brevard Childs, Bert Ehrman, Wycliffe Bible Translators, United Bible Societies, the Roman Catholic Church and the critical text, New English Bible, David

Black, Michael Holmes, Barclay Newman, Eugene Peterson and The Message.

**RICHARD SIMON (1638-1712)**

1. According to Bruce Metzger, Simon laid “the scientific foundations of New Testament criticism” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 155). Alexander Souter notes, “It would be impossible to exaggerate the value and suggestiveness of Simon’s work” (*The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, p. 98). That neither of these men warn about Simon’s gross unbelief and the damage he did to the cause of Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures is evidence of their own apostasy.

2. From a biblical standpoint, Simon was an unbeliever and a heretic.

- a. Simon was a French Roman Catholic who entered the Congregation of the Oratory in 1662. He taught philosophy at Juilly and Paris. Consider this quote from his 1689 *Critical History of the Text of the New Testament*, in which he rejects the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice and exalts Catholic tradition to the same authority. Note also that he implies that the original Scripture has not been carefully preserved and therefore the Scripture cannot be entirely authoritative: “A true Christian who professes to follow the Catholic faith must no more call himself a disciple of St. Augustine than of St. Jerome or of any other Church Father, for his faith is founded on the word of Jesus Christ, contained in the writings of the apostles AS WELL AS IN THE FIRM TRADITION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. ... The great changes that have taken place in the manuscripts of the Bible—as we have shown in the first book of this work—since the first originals were lost, completely destroy the principle of the Protestants and the Socinians, who only consult these same manuscripts of the Bible in the form they are today. IF THE TRUTH OF RELIGION HAD NOT LIVED ON IN THE CHURCH, IT WOULD NOT BE SAFE TO LOOK FOR IT NOW IN BOOKS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO SO MANY CHANGES and that in so many matters were dependent on the will of the copyists. It is certain that the Jews who copied these books took the liberty of adding certain letters here, and cutting out certain letters there, according as they judged it suitable; and yet the meaning of the text is often dependent on these letters. IF TRADITION IS NOT JOINED TO SCRIPTURE, THERE IS HARDLY ANYTHING IN RELIGION THAT ONE CAN CONFIDENTLY AFFIRM.” Thus Simon denied the divine preservation of Scripture and attempted to use textual criticism to weaken the authority of the Bible.
- b. Simon “disregarded the traditional and dogmatic presuppositions of his age” and “examined critically the text of the Bible as a piece of literature” (Metzger). What Metzger does not tell us is that this means that Simon did not regard the Bible as the supernaturally inspired, divinely preserved Word of God, but merely as another book.

- c. In the book *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament* (*Critical History of the Old Testament*), published in 1678, Simon denied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. (Since Metzger shares Simon's rationalism and unbelief--looking upon the Old Testament as a mixture of truth and myth--it is not surprising that he does not fear identifying this heretic as one of the fathers of modern textual criticism.) An English translation was published in London in 1682.
3. Another French Catholic priest in those days, Bernard de Montfaucon (1655-1741), applied critical rules to downgrade the Greek Received Text. His book was titled *Paleographic Graeca* (1708).
4. The writings of Simon and de Montfaucon give us a glimpse in the 17th century battle for the Greek Received Text and the Protestant versions based on it.
- a. Romanists were attacking the Received Text, because to destroy or weaken its authority was to destroy or weaken the Protestant faith, based, as it alleged, solely upon the Bible. The Romanists charged that the Protestants had replaced the living pope with a paper pope.
  - b. This attack did not go unanswered. Protestant leaders such as John Owen in England and Francis Turretin in Geneva refuted these criticisms. They did so by defending the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Text on the basis of divine preservation.
    - (1) Turretin said: "Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their ENTIRE PRESERVATION. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words, especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract, in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted; especially when he could easily foresee and prevent such corruptions in order to establish the faith of his church?" (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Eclectic Theology*, translated by George Giger).
    - (2) Consider also the Helvetica Formula Consensus Confession of 1675, published by Reformed churches in Switzerland: "God, the Supreme Judge, not only took care to have his word, which is the 'power of God unto salvation to every one that believes' (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the Prophets and the Apostles, BUT HAS ALSO WATCHED AND CHERISHED IT WITH PATERNAL CARE FROM THE TIME IT WAS WRITTEN UP TO THE PRESENT, SO THAT IT COULD NOT BE CORRUPTED BY CRAFT OF SATAN OR FRAUD OF MAN. Therefore the Church justly ascribes to it his singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world (2

Pet. 1:19), a ‘sure word of prophecy’ and ‘Holy Scriptures’ (2 Tim. 3:15), from which though heaven and earth pass away, ‘the smallest letter or the least stroke of a pen will not disappear by any means’ (Matt 5:18).”

- c. The Helvetica Formula Consensus Confession gives us a further glimpse into how the Romanists of that day and even some Calvinists in France with liberal leanings were undermining the authority of the Protestant Bible through textual criticism. In this case it was the Masoretic Hebrew text that was under attack. There were men in the 17th century who wanted to modify the Hebrew Masoretic text on precisely the same basis that it is being modified today, and the authors of the Helvetica Formula Consensus Confession understood that this was an attack upon the authenticity of Scripture. Consider the 3rd Canon of this confession: “Therefore, we are not able to approve of the opinion of those who believe that the text which the Hebrew Original exhibits was determined by man’s will alone, and do not hesitate at all to remodel a Hebrew reading which they consider unsuitable, and amend it from the versions of the LXX and other Greek versions, the Samaritan Pentateuch, by the Chaldaic Targums, or even from other sources. They go even to the point of following the corrections that their own rational powers dictate [two centuries later Hort called this ‘conjectural emendation’] from the various readings of the Hebrew Original itself which they maintain, has been corrupted in various ways; and finally, they affirm that besides the Hebrew edition of the present time, there are in the versions of the ancient interpreters which differ from our Hebrew text, other Hebrew Originals. Since these versions are also indicative of ancient Hebrew Originals differing from each other, they thus bring the foundation of our faith and its sacred authority into perilous danger” (Canon III, Formula Consensus Helvetica, 1675).
- d. The attack upon inspiration on the Calvinist side was from the theological school at Saumur in France. Two of the professors were Louis Cappel and Moses Amyraldus. Schaff’s book on Creeds observes, “[The school at Saumur] departed from the rigid orthodoxy then prevailing in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches on three points—THE VERBAL INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES, the particular predestination, and the imputation of Adam’s sin.”
- e. Thus we see that the first attack upon the Received Text was made during the Reformation era itself by Romanists and by theologically liberal French Calvinists.

### **JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH (1745-1812)**

1. Griesbach, a German, was one of the most important names in the development of modern textual criticism. While some (particularly evangelicals and fundamentalists) have tried to downplay his role, he was, in fact, extremely influential.

- a. Marvin R. Vincent says, “With Griesbach, really critical texts may be said to have

begun” (Marvin Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 1899, p. 100).

- b. Westcott and Hort said that in certain matters they venerated the name of Griesbach “above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament” (*New Testament in Greek*, 1881, vol. 2, p. 185). They adopted many of his principles of textual criticism and popularized them in their writings. A.T. Robertson states that Hort held Griesbach “to be the great man in textual criticism before his own day” (*An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, p. 30). In fact, Hort felt that “he was in reality taking up the work of Griesbach afresh” (Robertson, *An Introduction*, p. 29).
- c. Bruce Metzger observes: “Griesbach laid foundations for all subsequent work on the Greek text of the New Testament ... The importance of Griesbach for New Testament textual criticism can scarcely be overestimated” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 119, 121). Metzger reminds us that Westcott and Hort did not collate any manuscripts or provide a critical apparatus; rather they “refined the critical methodology developed by Griesbach, Lachmann, and others, and applied it rigorously” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 129).
- d. Kurt and Barbara Aland, though claiming that Griesbach’s influence “is today in danger of being exaggerated,” admit that “his influence was extraordinary as a model for many subsequent editors” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 9).

2. Griesbach was influenced from his undergraduate days by the rising tide of Rationalism sweeping over Germany and “was a foe of orthodox Christianity” (D.A. Thompson, *The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark*, p. 40). Griesbach was strongly influenced by his teacher at Halle, the modernist **JOHANN SEMLER** (1725-91).

- a. Semler is “often regarded as the father of German rationalism” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 115). He was greatly influenced by Roman Catholic Richard Simon’s 1689 book, *Critical History*.
- b. Semler rejected the traditional view that the entire canon of Scripture is infallibly inspired. “The traditional view regarded the canon as constituting a unit which is everywhere equally inspired; and this view had been shaken in his own mind by the studies of R. Simon Clericus, and Wettstein, and also by his own investigations. ... With respect to the canon, he came to think that the original idea was not that of a fixed norm of doctrine which should be binding for all ages, but rather that of ‘a catalog of the books which were read in the assemblies of Christians.’ These books were brought together through the force of accidental considerations rather than in pursuance of a definite plan. ... He insisted, further, that the Scriptural writings show



on their face that they were not intended to be a norm of doctrine for all men” (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*, “Johann Semler”). This is the view held by most prominent modern textual critics.

- c. Semler taught that the writers of the New Testament accommodated the teachings of Christianity to the needs of various classes of people, “which explains the appeal to miracles.”
- d. Semler looked upon the book of Revelation as “the production of an extravagant dreamer” and argued that it was not inspired or canonical.
- e. Semler believed that the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles contained error.
- f. Semler claimed that 2 Corinthians 9 was not originally part of Paul’s epistle but was inserted later by scribes, and that Romans 16 was originally part of a letter to the Corinthians that got attached to the epistle to the Romans by mistake.
- g. Semler taught that the moral truths of the Bible could, with equal truth, be “characterized as a revelation, or as a progressive development of the natural reason.”
- h. In his introduction to the book *Glaubenslehre* (1759) by Baumgarten (an influential professor at Halle who helped pave the way for Semler’s heresies), Semler “reduced the distinguishing peculiarity of Christianity [over atheism and paganism] to a better morality.”
- i. In his researches into church history, Semler favored “Pelagius alone” and published one of Pelagius’ writings in 1775. Pelagius, who lived in the late 4th and early 5th century, was a heretic who denied inherited sin and taught that children are born innocent of the sin of Adam and that sinners are capable of doing good works in their own moral strength (through God’s help), as Adam and Eve could do before the fall. He taught that pagans could go to heaven through their moral actions prior to the coming of Christ.
- j. Semler eventually became a believer in alchemy (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*), which was the search for a chemical process to convert ordinary metals to gold.

3. Griesbach was associated with the modernist W.M.L. de Wette and wrote the preface to de Wette’s *Contributions to Old Testament Introduction* (1806-07). In this work de Wette, one of the fathers of liberal Old Testament criticism, denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that the book of Deuteronomy was not written until the reign of King Josiah. This makes the Jews out to be idiots who do not even know their own history and is a blatant denial of the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

4. Griesbach adopted his textual principles primarily from Semler and Bengel.

- a. Griesbach adopted Semler's practice of grouping manuscripts into three families, Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine (or "Asiatic") and favoring the Alexandrian or Egyptian over the Byzantine. "... he constantly displays a very decided preference for the Alexandrian class, which he places far above the two others in the rank of authority, a few manuscripts of this recension being supposed to outweigh a multitude of such as belong to the Byzantine recension, which he regards as certainly the most untrustworthy of all" (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia*).
- b. Griesbach adopted Semler's recension theory that claims the Traditional Text is an editorial revision created centuries after the apostles. This myth was later popularized by Westcott and Hort.
- c. Griesbach also adopted from Semler the strange principle that textual readings favoring theological orthodoxy should be suspect. Griesbach said, "The most suspicious reading of all is the one that yields a sense favorable to the nourishment of piety (especially monastic piety)"; and, "When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious." Semler and Griesbach could adopt such a strange principle because they blatantly denied biblical preservation and falsely believed that the orthodox statements of the New Testament were created by textual editors during the early centuries. According to this principle, if there is a reading in the Received Text that plainly teaches the Godhead of Christ or some other foundational doctrine of the New Testament faith, that reading should be held suspect in favor of a variant in some old manuscript that lessens or does away with the doctrine. This, my friends, is topsy-turvy thinking! God is the author of truth not heresy. And Bible-believing people do not tamper with the Holy Scripture in order to further their beloved doctrines!
- d. Griesbach adopted Bengel's principle that "the hard reading is to be preferred to the easy reading" and claimed that orthodox Christians had corrupted their own New Testament.
- e. Griesbach held that "the shorter reading (under most circumstances) is to be preferred to the more verbose." It is not therefore surprising that the critical edition of the Greek New Testament is shorter than the Received Text by the equivalent of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter. Griesbach was the first to declare Mark 16:9-20 spurious and to omit it from the Greek New Testament (in his 1796 edition).
- f. Griesbach followed Semler in favoring the work of Origen. "... finding the coincidence of the numerous scriptural quotations of Origen of Alexandria with the

celebrated Greek manuscript of the New Testament from that city to be very striking, he thence concludes that the passages now extant in this father's writings, of the commencement of the 3d century, discover the earliest, and therefore the purest text of which we have any knowledge to be that of the Alexandrian manuscripts. His ultimate choice of readings is consequently determined by the testimony of Origen. ... *The primary fact enforced by Griesbach [is] that the Alexandrian readings which are supported by the quotations of Origen possess the highest authority of all...*" (McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia).

5. Griesbach made three textual changes that were roundly condemned by Bible believers. "Griesbach was long and severely attacked by Trinitarian writers as an opposer of the doctrine of Christ's divinity, chiefly in consequence of his having rejected from his text the celebrated passage respecting the three that bare witness (1 John 5:7), and also for inserting 'os' (*which*) for 'theos' (*God*) in 1 Timothy 3:16, and 'kurios' (Lord) for 'theos' (*God*) in Acts 20:28" (Frederic Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, 1815). Bible believers of that day understood that these textual changes were serious doctrinal issues. Nolan said they affected "the doctrinal integrity of the inspired text." Today we are amazed to hear evangelicals and fundamentalists claim that such textual changes are inconsequential and have no doctrinal significance.

6. Griesbach wrongly claimed that Gregory of Nyssa in the 4th century was hostile to the reading "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16, but he erred in this. In reality, Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394 A.D.) quoted "God" 22 times in his surviving writings. "The words quoted by Griesbach from Wettstein were not the words of Gregory at all, but the opinion of Apollinaris against whom Gregory was writing" (Terence H. Brown, *God Was Manifested in the Flesh*, Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England).

7. Griesbach's theories were rejected by Bible believers of his day. Following are some examples:

- a. Even most textual scholars of that day, such as Matthaei and Birch, continued to adhere to the Received Text and "repudiated the doctrine of Griesbach" (Frederic Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, p. 177).
- b. Martin Scholz of Bonn, Germany, took a stand against Griesbach. "The primary fact enforced by Griesbach, that the Alexandrian readings which are supported by the quotations of Origen possess the highest authority of all, is disputed by professor Matthaei, of Moscow, in his critical edition of the New Testament, and with greater confidence by professor Martin Scholz, of Bonn, in the prolegomena to his very learned and elaborate edition, founded on a system wholly at variance with that of Griesbach. THE ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPTS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED BY SCHOLZ TO BE MORE ANCIENT, BUT HE ASSERTS THEM TO BE MORE CORRUPT THAN ANY OTHERS, AND CONTENDS THAT IN

ALEXANDRIA THE ALTERATIONS OF THE TEXT PRINCIPALLY ORIGINATED. He divides all the manuscripts, not, as Griesbach, into three, but into two classes, the Byzantine and the Alexandrian, in which latter he includes the Western; and he gives a *decided superiority to the authority of the Byzantine recensions, which, in opposition to Griesbach, he strenuously maintains to be directly derived from the autographs of the evangelists and apostles themselves*" (emphasis added) (*McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*). We should note that the *McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia* defended modern textual criticism and when this article speaks of "Byzantine recension," it reflects its author's liberal bias. It has never been proven that the Traditional Text is the product of a recension.

- c. Richard Laurence (1760-1838), Anglican Archbishop of Cashel, also took a stand against Griesbach. In 1814 he published "Remarks upon the Systematical Classification of Manuscripts adopted by Dr. Griesbach." The following review is from the *McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia*: "The learned author states that he considers Griesbach to be what bishop Marsh denominated him, 'the most consummate critic that ever undertook an edition of the New Testament;' but in the course of his critical strictures on the origin and execution of his plan of appreciating manuscripts, *he employs the severest terms of censure, observing that Griesbach's mode of investigation is unsatisfactory, his classification fallacious, and his statement of the number of readings inaccurate*; that no such classification of the manuscripts of the New Testament is possible, the existence of three distinct species of texts being a fact only synthetically presumed, and not capable of any analytical demonstration; so that '*THE STUDENT FINDS HE IS TREADING, NOT ON SOLID GROUND, BUT ON A CRITICAL QUICKSAND*'" (emphasis added) (*McClintock & Strong*).
- d. Another example of those who boldly resisted Griesbach's textual theories and defended the Traditional Text is Frederick Nolan, who, in 1815, published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text of the New Testament* (576 pages). Nolan said, "... it shall be my object to vindicate those important passages of the Received Text which have been rejected from the Scripture Canon, on the principles of the German method of classification" (p. 43). Among the several passages that he vindicated were 1 Timothy 3:16, Acts 20:28, and 1 John 5:7. Nolan warned: "Griesbach's theory is one of the most elaborate of *THOSE THAT HAVE UNSETTLED THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH RESTS THE ENTIRE CANON*. His corrected text can be received only as a proof of the general corruption of the sacred Scriptures, and of the faithlessness of the traditionary testimony by which it is supported, since he states that the two principal classes of text, the Alexandrian and the Western, have been interpolated in every part; that the authorized Greek version exhibits 150,000 various readings, and has remained 1400 years in its present state of corruption; that there appears, therefore, to be no reservation by which the doctrinal integrity of the sacred Scriptures can be saved; for if, in the apostolic and

primitive ages, corruption was prevalent, whatever be the text gathered out of the immense number of various readings, it may be as well any other as that originally delivered by the inspired writers.”

8. Though rejected by Bible believers, Griesbach’s textual criticism was received with great eagerness by Christ-denying Unitarians, Modernists, and Cultists.

- a. “[Thomas] Belsham was busily occupied in his own field in London. As minister at Essex Street he was looked to as practically the leader and mouthpiece of the Unitarians. ... But HIS PREDOMINANT INTEREST AT THIS PERIOD WAS IN THE PREPARATION OF A NEW VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, BASED UPON A GREEK TEXT EMBODYING THE RESULTS OF RECENT CRITICISM. A project for a work of this sort had been proposed by [Joseph] Priestley in 1789, and was well advanced toward completion, when an important part of the manuscript was destroyed in the Birmingham Riots in 1791. Later in the same year, WHEN THE UNITARIAN BOOK SOCIETY WAS FORMED, THE TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS MADE ONE OF ITS MAIN OBJECTS. After some five years’ delay it was decided not to make an independent version, but to adopt the excellent one [this was the opinion of the Unitarian author of this history] of Archbishop William Newcome, Primate of Ireland, as a basis, CHIEFLY BECAUSE IT FOLLOWED GRIESBACH’S TEXT, and to accompany it with an introduction and notes. The plan was taken up with ardor, and the work was published in 1808, in three sizes, and later in several editions; and it was at once reprinted in America (Boston, 1809), where Unitarianism was already incubating. IT INCLUDED A VALUABLE INTRODUCTION ON THE PROGRESS AND PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM, ANTICIPATING MANY JUDGMENTS LATER ADOPTED IN THE REVISED VERSION OF 1881; BUT DREW THE FIRE OF THE ORTHODOX BY OMITTING AS LATE INTERPOLATIONS SEVERAL PASSAGES TRADITIONALLY CITED AS PILLARS OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE. [Examples of these omissions were the removal of the word “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 and the deletion of 1 John 5:7.] Belsham had taken the leading part in the editing of the work, and he regarded it with great satisfaction. It was widely circulated in Unitarian quarters...” (Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952, pp. 338, 339).
- b. Officials at Harvard College in 1809 published an American edition of Griesbach’s critical Greek N.T., because its textual criticism was “a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration” (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2). This was about the time that Harvard capitulated to Unitarianism. Thus, the enemies of Biblical inspiration understood in that day that modern textual criticism weakens key doctrines of the orthodox faith and undermines the authority of the Bible.

- c. The Universalist Abner Kneeland published a New Testament diglot in Greek and English in 1822. The Greek was Griesbach's and the English was a revised edition of Belsham's. Kneeland was the minister of the First Independent Church of Christ, called Universalist (it has also been identified as the Lombard Street Universalist Church), in Philadelphia, and later became a deist. In the last blasphemy trial in Massachusetts, Kneeland was convicted and jailed in 1838, "for a certain scandalous, impious, obscene, blasphemous and profane libel of and concerning God."
- d. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ, with its baptismal regeneration heresy, chose the Griesbach New Testament for his 1826 translation entitled "The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament."
- e. The Unitarian John Gorham Palfrey published an English New Testament in 1828 based on Griesbach's Greek. His work appeared anonymously.
- f. In 1833 Rodolphus Dickinson published his "Minute Revision and Professed Translation" based on Griesbach. Acts 1:18 gives a sample of the strange flavor of this version. "This man ... caused a field to be purchased with the recompense of his iniquity; and falling prostrate, a violent internal spasm ensued, and all his viscera were emitted."
- g. In 1902 the Jehovah's Witness Watchtower Bible & Tract Society began publishing the *Emphatic Diaglott* by B.F. Wilson. This private interlinear was first published in 1865 and was based on the Griesbach critical Greek New Testament and "the various readings of the Vatican Manuscript, No. 1209 in the Vatican Library." Wilson was affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, which held the heresy of baptismal regeneration, and was also associated with a cult called the "Restitution Church of God." The Jehovah's Witnesses have printed several hundred thousand copies of the *Emphatic Diaglott*.

9. Thus, at the beginning of the 19th century, Bible-believing Christians rejected the critical text as heretical, but the Unitarians and Modernists joyfully received it because it supported their doctrinal heresies pertaining to the Trinity and Christ's deity, and also because the multiplicity of texts weakened the authority of Scripture. By the end of the 19th century, apostasy had so leavened many of the denominations that the Westcott-Hort Greek, which was built upon the Griesbach text and which contained the same type of doctrinal corruptions (in fact, the Westcott-Hort text was more radical and farther removed from the Received Text), found wide acceptance. Those (such as James White) that are denying today that the critical Greek text is less doctrinally sound than the Received Text are flying in the face of the facts. The old Unitarians understood the doctrinal differences between the texts. They rejected the Received

Text because it more effectively defeated their heresies. They made the translation of a new Bible based upon the critical text a top priority. For those who have ears to hear, this speaks volumes.

### **FRIEDRICH CONSTANTINE VON TISCHENDORF (1815-1874)**

1. Tischendorf was a German textual critic who traveled extensively in search of ancient documents. He obtained a doctor of philosophy at the University at Leipsic. In 1841 he published the first of eight editions of his Greek New Testament.

2. Tischendorf was instrumental in bringing to light one of the manuscripts most influential in modern Bible translation work--Codex Sinaiticus, which he discovered at St. Catherine's Orthodox monastery at Mt. Sinai in 1859. Tischendorf was so blinded by his affection for Codex Sinaiticus that he modified the 8th edition of his Greek New Testament in 3,505 places in favor of it.

3. Tischendorf was committed to the textual theories of Griesbach and Lachmann (Thompson, p. 42). His foundational error, like that of other 19th century textual critics, was in failing to recognize God's promise of preservation. He described his textual criticism as "the struggle to regain the original form of the New Testament" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 126). Had he believed the Bible's own testimony, he would have known by faith that the New Testament did not need to be recovered because it was not lost!

4. Tischendorf was contracted by a French publishing house, Firmin Didot, to edit an edition of the Greek New Testament for the Roman Catholic Church, conforming it to the Latin Vulgate (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*). This was in 1842, and the *McClintock & Strong Cyclopedia* notes that an influential Roman Catholic Abbe named Jager, a professor in the Sorbonne, begged Tischendorf to do this project.

5. John Burgon observed that Tischendorf is one of the worst guides to the true Text of Scripture because of "his great inconstancy,--his natural want of sobriety of critical judgment,--and his unreasonable deference to the readings found in his own codex Sinaiticus,-- to which should be added the utter absence in him of any intelligible fixed critical principles" (*The Revision Revised*, p. 24).

6. Tischendorf's work was loved and accepted by the Unitarians.

- a. In 1869, the American Unitarian Association published a New Testament translated by George R. Noyes, based on Tischendorf's Greek New Testament.
- b. Two Unitarians, Caspar Gregory and Ezra Abbot, reissued the eighth edition of Tischendorf's New Testament with critical notes after his death.

7. Tischendorf was widely praised and awarded. “Probably no theologian ever received so varied and so many signs of distinction, academic and civil. He was made a Russian noble, a Saxon privy-councilor, knight of any orders, doctor of all academic degrees, and ‘member of an indefinite number of societies’” (*McClintock & Strong*). The Lord Jesus Christ warned: “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets” (Lk. 6:26).

8. In his last will, Tischendorf wrote, “I have sought no other aim than truth; to her I have always unconditionally bowed the knee.” Tischendorf’s life is a loud warning that sincere men can be deeply deceived if they fail to ground their lives and ministries upon Scripture alone (Prov. 14:12; Mat. 7:21-29). Had he believed the Word of God, he would have known that the apostolic text of the New Testament would not be found in peculiar manuscripts that had been rejected by the vast majority of churches through the centuries. Had he loved the truth, truly, Tischendorf would have received the same treatment as Truth incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ. The world has not changed; it still hates the truth and those who stand for the truth.

### **GEORGE VANCE SMITH (1816-1902)**

1. Smith was on the British committee that produced the English Revised Version New Testament (1870-81).

2. He was the Unitarian minister of St. Saviourgate Chapel, York, denying the deity and atonement of Jesus Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and the divine inspiration of Scripture. Consider some of the heresies and blasphemies that came from the pen of this man:

a. Consider his book *The Bible and Popular Theology*, which appeared in 1871. It was republished as late as 1901 in an enlarged fifth edition entitled *The Bible and Its Theology: A Review, Comparison, and Re-statement*.

(1) He denied the full deity of Jesus Christ: “Jesus of Nazareth is nowhere presented to us as God, but simply as the Christ... ‘There is one God, the Father,’ and ‘one Lord, Jesus Christ;’ but these are not in any sense one being or one nature” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 299).

(2) He denied the personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity: “... what is really meant by the term in question [the Holy Spirit], is no other than God himself ... but this fact will not justify us in saying that it is ‘God the Holy Spirit,’ as though it were a distinct personality...” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 215).

(3) He denied the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ:

“[Salvation] was in no way purchased of him [God] or of his justice. It was not



because his ‘wrath’ was appeased, or satisfied by the sufferings of an innocent substitute, but because of his own essential fatherly goodness and ‘great love.’ ‘It is the gift of God,’ not a thing bought from him with a price, except in so far as this might be FIGURATIVELY said in reference to that death of the Messiah...” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 246).

“... it is equally clear that it was not as their substitute that he died for men; not to redeem them from eternal misery; not ... because the clouds of God’s wrath had gathered thick over the human race, and required a victim, and could find that victim only in the innocent Jesus! ... The popular theory, in reality, is largely the product of dark and ignorant ages...” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, pp. 248, 253).

(4) He denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture: “It is, that the Bible manifestly offers itself to us, the people of these later times, largely as a Book of History. It never professes or claims to be more: never, in truth, makes any profession or claim at all on that point; but stands before us there, simply as a collection of writings preserving for us the remaining literature, the traditions, and the history of the Hebrews. ... It nowhere, in truth, claims inspiration, or says anything definite about it. The biblical inspiration, whatever it is or was, would seem, like the genius of Shakespeare, to be unconsciously possessed. The phrase, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ and its equivalents, are simply to be referred to the style of the prophet; or to be understood only as indicating his belief that what he was about to say was conformable to the Divine Will. ... It is scarcely allowable, in short, to think of inspiration as being or acting in THE DEAD WORDS OF ANY BOOK” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, pp. 269, 276, 277). [COMMENT: Thus we see how this Bible reviser looked upon the Bible: dead words!]

(5) He denied the necessity of the new birth: “Then again, are we not, all of us who seek to be so, spiritual Sons of God?” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 298).

- b. Consider Smith’s tract *The Word Made Flesh in Jesus Christ* (British & Foreign Unitarian Association: London, 1877). In this work, Smith leans on the writings of the ancient heretic Philo of Alexandria to deny the deity of Jesus Christ. Smith says: “What the Evangelist really meant by adopting this ancient conception, and saying that the Logos became flesh in Christ, was simply that power and wisdom from God were with him and in him...” (p. 5). Smith claims that the Lord Jesus was not announcing his deity in John 8:58 (even though the Jews understood that He was, v. 59). He concludes with a most bold statement of his unbelief when he says that “the whole orthodox conception on these matters [the deity and incarnation of Christ] is essentially on a par with the wildest stories of the ancient heathen mythology” (p. 7).

c. Consider Smith's *Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament Affecting Theological Doctrine* (British & Foreign Unitarian Association: London, 1881).

- (1) On Matthew 1:23, "they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us" -- "A more careful and impartial regard to the usage of the Greek language ... would have rendered these words differently. ... Remembering this fact we should render, 'God is with us;' and the implication is, that, in the child to be born, the promised Christ, God will be with his people to protect and save them" (p. 9).
- (2) On Matthew 5:22, "shall be in danger of hell fire" -- "... the phrase 'Gehenna of fire' ... ought clearly to have stood in the text. ... It is one of the gravest faults of our systematising theologians and preachers to persist, as they do, in keeping up ideas of hell, with its devils, and its everlasting flames and torments, which have descended to us from the distant ignorant ages of patristic and medieval superstition" (pp. 10, 11).
- (3) On Acts 20:28, "the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood" -- "If, too, it should appear, as we shall see it does, that St. Paul in his extant Epistles has nowhere spoken of Jesus as 'God,' even in the subordinate or Logos sense, it is altogether unlikely that he should have done so in his speech in Acts 20 to the elders at Ephesus" (p. 26).
- (4) Smith concludes this book with the following statement: "Since the publication of the revised New Testament, it has been frequently said that the changes of translation which the work contains are of little importance from a doctrinal point of view;--in other words, that the great doctrines of popular theology remain unaffected, untouched by the results of the revision. ... To the writer any such statement appears to be in the most substantial sense contrary to the facts of the case..." (p. 45). [COMMENT: Thus, this Unitarian understood clearly that the results of modern textual criticism do affect the Bible's doctrine.]

d. Consider Smith's *Eternal Punishment*, published as chapter three of *The Religion and Theology of Unitarians* (British & Foreign Unitarian Society: London, 1906). "What should we think of a man who should consign one who had injured him to torment for his life in a place of fire and brimstone, if such a thing were possible? And what must we think of a God who could consign his creatures who had offended him to torments, not of lifelong, but of everlasting duration? ... If all this be true of God, surely man had better not be told to imitate him, and can never love him with any genuine, durable love. He may, indeed, fear or even hate the author of his existence; but how, on this theory of an eternal hell, he can love him, is surely inconceivable" (pp. 91, 93). [COMMENT: Here the Bible translator and modern textual critic not only demonstrates his ignorance of the holiness and justice of God

but he also candidly expresses his genuine opinion of the God of the Bible.]

3. When an attempt was made to have Smith removed from the ERV translation committee, four other members of the committee (Westcott, Hort, Stanley, and Thirlwall) stood by him and threatened that they would resign if Smith were removed. The sordid story is given by A.G. Hobbs in the foreword to the Centennial Edition of Burgon's *The Revision Revised*: "[Smith's participation in the communion service] led to a public protest signed by 'some thousands of the Clergy.' The Upper House passed a Resolution that 'no person who denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be invited to join either company to which was committed the Revision of the Authorized Version of Holy Scripture: and that it is further the judgment of this House that any person now on either Company should cease to act therewith.' This Resolution was also passed by the Lower House. And still they could not get this non-believer off the Committee. Here is a real shocker: Dean Stanley, Westcott, Hort, and Bishop Thirlwall all refused to serve if Smith were dismissed. Let us remember that the Bible teaches that those who uphold and bid a false teacher God speed are equally guilty. 'For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds' (2 John 9-11). No wonder that the Deity of Christ is played down in so many passages!" (A.G. Hobbs, foreword, *The Revision Revised Centennial Edition*).

4. Smith testified that the textual changes in the English Revised Version and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own theology. Some of the passages listed by Smith as being theologically superior in the modern texts and versions as opposed to the King James Bible were Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; and 1 Jn. 5:7, and that is because these passages in the critical text weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity, which Smith rejected. This Bible Reviser admitted what modern version proponents today such as James White try to deny, that the critical Greek texts and versions weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ! No man is blinder than he who WILL NOT see. Following are two examples from Smith's own pen:

- a. "The only instance in the N.T. in which the religious worship or adoration of Christ was apparently implied, has been altered by the Revision: 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' [Philippians 2:10] is now to be read 'in the name.' Moreover, no alteration of text or of translation will be found anywhere to make up for this loss; as indeed IT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD THAT THE N.T. CONTAINS NEITHER PRECEPT NOR EXAMPLE WHICH REALLY SANCTIONS THE RELIGIOUS WORSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST" (Smith, *Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament Affecting Theological Doctrine Briefly Reviewed*, p. 47). [COMMENT: This statement, of course, is a lie; but we reprint it to demonstrate the damnable heresies of this modern textual critic. Eleven times in the Gospels we are told that Christ accepted worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). This is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is Almighty God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10).]
- b. "The old reading ["God" in 1 Tim. 3:16] is pronounced untenable by the Revisers, as

it has long been known to be by all careful students of the New Testament. ... It is in truth another example of the facility with which ancient copiers could introduce the word *God* into their manuscripts,--a reading which was the natural result of THE GROWING TENDENCY IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TIMES ... TO LOOK UPON THE HUMBLE TEACHER AS THE INCARNATE WORD, AND THEREFORE AS ‘GOD MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH’” (G. Vance Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).

**BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT** (1825-1901) and **FENTON JOHN ANTHONY HORT** (1828-1892)

1. B.F. Westcott was Canon of Peterborough, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and Bishop of Durham (consecrated 1890). F.J.A. Hort was Hulsean Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. These two men edited the critical Greek N.T. published in 1881 and were on the British committee that produced the English Revised Version (ERV). They secretly introduced their pre-publication critical Greek New Testament to the ERV committee, beginning in 1870.

2. Their apostasy is witnessed by their writings and affiliations. Hort was the less evangelical and more outspoken of the two men as pertaining to his rationalism. Westcott published commentaries that are still in print today, and he became the “evangelical face” to the Westcott-Hort textual theories, though, as we will see, Westcott was anything but a staunch Bible believer. We must note that some fundamentalists who defend modern textual criticism are claiming that Westcott and Hort were staunch evangelicals. In fact, in the Introduction to *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, authored by men associated with Bob Jones University, J.B. Williams says: “I challenge anyone to find one sentence that would be a departure from Fundamentalist doctrine” (p. 4). We take up that challenge in the following study.

- a. Consider, first, the testimony of some men who have studied the doctrines, theories, and lives of Westcott and Hort:

The testimony of D.A. Thompson, who looked into these matters carefully: “Neither of these scholars had been evangelical and as the influence of the German neology increased they moved slowly and discreetly with the times” (*The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to Mark*. Surrey: The Bible Christian Unity Fellowship, nd.; Thompson was of the Reformed Episcopal Church of England).

The testimony of Zane Hodges of Dallas Theological Seminary. “The charge of rationalism is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort and may be demonstrated from direct statements found in their introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. To begin with, Westcott and Hort are clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original

Scriptures” (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

The testimony of Alfred Martin, Vice President of Moody Bible Institute, in his 1951 doctoral dissertation to the faculty of the Graduate School of Dallas Theological Seminary: “At precisely the time when liberalism was carrying the field in the English churches the theory of Westcott and Hort received wide acclaim. These are not isolated facts. Recent contributions on the subject--that is, in the present century--following mainly the Westcott-Hort principles and method, have been made largely by men who deny the inspiration of the Bible” (Alfred Martin, “A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory.” Th.D. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1951, p. 70).

The testimony of Donald Waite, who studied 1,291 pages of their writings and concluded that, among other things, Westcott and Hort did not affirm the infallibility of Scripture; they undermined the vicarious substitutionary atonement of Christ; they embraced the Fatherhood of God and evolution. Dr. Waite warns that the heresy of Westcott and Hort is subtle. Like many neo-orthodox and modernistic theologians, Westcott and Hort did not so much deny the doctrines of the Word of God directly; they undermined orthodox doctrine with clever doubt and with subtle questioning. Dr. Waite’s books on this subject (*The Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort: As Seen in Their Own Writings* and *Heresies of Westcott & Hort*) are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblefortoday.org>.

- b. Consider, also, the testimony of the biographies of Westcott and Hort published by their sons (Arthur Fenton Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, London: MacMillan and Co., 1896, and Arthur Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott, Sometime Bishop of Durham*, London: MacMillan and Co., 1903). Hort’s biography is available as a photocopy reprint from Bible for Today, Collingswood, New Jersey.

The following are some samples from these biographies. For further quotes see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

“Further I agree with them [authors of *Essays and Reviews*] in condemning many leading specific doctrines of the popular theology. ... Evangelicals seem to me perverted rather than untrue ... There are, I fear, still more serious differences between us on the subject of authority and especially the authority of the Bible” (Hort writing to Rowland Williams in 1858, cited in *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, 1958, Vol. I, p. 400).

“But I am not able to go as far as you in asserting the infallibility of a canonical writing” (Hort writing to Westcott in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Fenton*

*John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I, p. 422). [COMMENT: Hort plainly denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture; as we will see, Westcott also rejected this doctrine.]

“For I too ‘must disclaim settling for infallibility.’ In the front of my convictions all I hold is the more I learn, the more I am convinced that fresh doubts come from my own ignorance, and that at present I find the presumption in favor of the absolute truth--I reject the word infallibility--of the Holy Scripture overwhelming” (Westcott writing to Hort in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 207). [COMMENT: This is standard Westcottism. He wants to hold the Bible as absolute truth but not as infallible, which is impossible except to deluded minds such as Westcott’s. His writings often appear to be doctrinally sound but he will redefine terms so that what he seems to say is not what he really means; and he contradicts himself as he does in this exchange with Hort, speaking the truth on the one hand while taking it away on the other. In this, Westcott was a contrast to Hort, who was more forthright about his unbelief.]

“I am glad that you take the same provisional ground as to infallibility that I do” (Hort writing to Lightfoot in 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 424). [COMMENT: Thus, after corresponding with his friend Lightfoot, another translator of the English Revised Version, on the issue of biblical inspiration, it was Hort’s understanding that Lightfoot held the same heretical view of inspiration that he held.]

“But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. ... My feeling is strong that the theory is unanswerable” (Hort writing on April 3, 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1). [COMMENT: Darwinianism is a direct assault upon the Scriptures and upon the Gospel (which is predicated upon man’s literal creation, fall, and subsequent need of redemption).]

“No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis give literal history--I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did--yet they disclose to us a Gospel. So it is probably elsewhere [in the Bible]” (Westcott, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1890, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. II, p. 69). [COMMENT: Westcott wrote this in his old age. It is obvious that even when he spoke of the Gospel, he was speaking allegorically, because in his view the very foundation of the Bible was not literal history. Like Plato, Westcott held that myth could present spiritual truth. Of course, the denial of the historicity of Genesis 1-3 is a denial of Redemption and of Jesus Christ, who taught a literal Adam and Eve. If there is no literal fall there is no literal salvation, and if the

first chapters of Genesis are myth the rest of the Bible is nonsense.]

“I am inclined to think that no such state as ‘Eden’ (I mean the popular notion) ever existed, and that Adam’s fall in no degree differed from the fall of each of his descendants, as Coleridge justly argues” (Westcott, *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 78). [COMMENT: This is a plain denial of the Bible and also of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, for they testified plainly to the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis and of the account of Adam’s fall. See Mat. 19:4-6; 23:35; Rom. 5:12, 14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13-14; Jude 14.]

“But you know I am a staunch sacerdotalist” (Hort to Lightfoot, 1867, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. II, p. 86). [COMMENT: A sacerdotalist is one who believes in a Catholic-like priesthood that mediates between God and men. Again this shows Hort’s affinity with the Rome-leaning Tractarian movement.]

“... the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit. ... Certainly nothing could be more unscriptural than the modern limiting of Christ’s bearing our sins and sufferings to his death; but indeed that is only one aspect of an almost universal heresy” (Hort to Westcott, 1860, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. I, p. 430). [COMMENT: What Hort called heresy is, in fact, the truth. The atonement of Christ was made through His literal blood and death, not by His life. We are justified by His blood and reconciled by His death (Rom. 5:9-10). Note that Hort decries a “material” doctrine of the atonement, referring to literal blood and death. The heresy is on Hort’s side, and it is not merely heresy; it is “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold it cannot be saved.]

- c. Consider, next, the testimony of the published writings of Westcott and Hort. [Some of the following is adapted from two books by Dr. Donald Waite of Bible for Today, *Theological Heresies of Westcott and Hort as Seen in Their Own Writings* (1978) and *Westcott’s Denial of Christ’s Bodily Resurrection* (1983).]

The following are samples from Westcott and Hort’s writings. For further quotes see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

“Little is gained by speculating as to the precise point at which such corruptions came in [to the Bible]. They may be due to the original writer, or to his amanuensis if he wrote from dictation, or they may be due to one of the earliest transcribers” (Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, Introduction, pp. 280-81). [COMMENT: This is an open denial of divine inspiration and preservation.]

[Commenting on John 10:29 and 1 John 1:2] “The thought, which is concrete in v.

28, is here traced back to its most absolute form as resting on the essential power of God in His relation of Universal Fatherhood” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 159). “The idea of the divine fatherhood, answering to that of human sonship and childship, occupies an important place in the writings of St. John” (Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, p. 27). [COMMENT: The heresy of the universal fatherhood of God is nowhere taught in Scripture. Unsaved sinners are not children of God until they come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus told the Pharisees that they were children of the devil (John 8:44).]

[Commenting on John 1:18] “The Son made God known not primarily as God, but as the Father” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 15). [COMMENT: In fact, Christ Jesus made God known primarily as God, and that is the theme of John’s Gospel beginning with the very first verse.]

[Commenting on 1 John 2:2] “Such phrases as ‘propitiating God’ ... are foreign to the language of the N.T.” (Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*, 1883, p. 87). [COMMENT: In fact, propitiation is always spoken of in the New Testament in relation to God. Sinners have sinned against God and broken His holy law and they owe a sin debt that is propitiated (satisfied by the payment of a debt) only through the blood and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25). Thus we see that Westcott, like his friend Hort, held a heretical view of the atonement. This is a “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold it cannot be saved.]

[Commenting on John 1:29, 13:31] “... the redemptive efficacy of Christ’s work is to be found in His whole life. ... The redemptive work of Christ essentially was completed [by the time of His discourse in John 13]” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 20, 196). [COMMENT: In fact, the redemption was purchased not by Christ’s life but by His death and blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:22). Liberals downgrade the value of Christ’s blood and its necessity for salvation.]

[Commenting on Hebrews 9:12, 14] “I have endeavoured to shew elsewhere that the Scriptural idea of blood is essentially an idea of life and not of death. ... Death again, which makes the blood available, is the seal of the validity of a covenant” (Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1889, p. 293, 261). [COMMENT: Westcott again spiritualizes the atonement, downplaying the blood and turning it into a mere metaphor for death, which is a gross heresy. It is the same heresy held today by Eugene Nida and Robert Bratcher, both of whom are associated with the United Bible Societies.]

[Commenting on 1 Peter 1:2, 19] “In the N.T. the blood of Christ is associated with various images which need to be clearly distinguished. There is here [1 Peter 1:2] no direct reference to the idea of purchase or ransom, as in vv. 18, 19... or to



the ideal of sacrificial atonement, as in several other books of the N.T. ... The true lesson [of 1 Peter 1:19] is that the language which speaks of a ransom is but figurative language..." (Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, pp. 23, 80). [COMMENT: In fact, the blood of Christ is always directly associated with the doctrine of ransom and sacrificial atonement. Like Westcott, Hort spiritualizes the blood of Christ and downplays its essential nature in the atonement.]

[Commenting on John 1:18 and 14:2] "The 'bosom of the Father' [like heaven] is a state and not a place. ... heaven is where God is seen as our Father. We dare not add any local limitation, even in thought, to this final conception" (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 15, 200). [COMMENT: Westcott allegorized both heaven and hell. In fact, heaven is nowhere in Scripture described as a state but always as a place (John 14:1). It is called "paradise" (2 Cor. 12:2-4).]

[Commenting on 1 Peter 1:5] "It is hardly necessary to say that this whole local language ["reserved in heaven"] is figurative only..." (Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 37). [COMMENT: Like Westcott, Hort allegorized heaven.]

[Commenting on John 1:1] "Because the Word was personally distinct from 'God' and yet essentially 'God,' He could make Him known. ... Thus we are led to conceive that the divine nature is essentially in the Son" (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 2, 3). [COMMENT: This is a gross heresy pertaining to the deity of Christ. He was not distinct from God nor was He merely "essentially" God. He was fully and completely "God manifest in the flesh."]

[Commenting on Revelation 3:14, "the beginning of the creation of God"] "The words might no doubt bear the Arian meaning 'the first thing created'..." (Hort, *The Apocalypse of St. John 1-3*, p. 36). [COMMENT: Though Hort proceeds to say that the words can "equally well bear" another meaning, the fact remains that he has left his readers with the idea that the Arian heresy that Christ is not the eternal God but was a created being is a possibility.]

[Commenting on John 20:28] "He never speaks of himself directly as God (compare v. 18), but the aim of His revelation was to lead men to see God in Him" (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, p. 297). [COMMENT: In fact, Jesus did refer to Himself as God and this is why the Jews wanted to kill Him (Jn. 8:58-59; 10:30-33).]

"This Catholicity of the Bible--a Catholicity in subject and in application--is largely dependent upon the fact that the Bible is MAINLY historical. It has pleased God to reveal Himself in and through life. And the record of the revelation is literary and NOT DOGMATIC" (Westcott, *Of the Revelation of the Risen Lord*, 1902, p.

x). [COMMENT: Thus Westcott states that the Bible is not fully historical nor is it dogmatic. This is a plain denial of the supernatural inspiration of Scripture.]

“I believe in the resurrection of the flesh. ... The ‘flesh’ of which we speak as destined to a resurrection is not that material substance which we can see and handle, measured by properties of sense” (Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 136). [COMMENT: Westcott denied the bodily resurrection by redefining terms.]

“If we feel that the balance of evidence favours the belief in the evolution of life, or more truly of the organisms through which the life reveals itself, according to the action of uniform laws, we do not lose but gain by the conclusions” (Westcott, *The Gospel of Life*, 1888, pp. 245-46). [COMMENT: This is another clear statement of support for the heresy of evolution.]

d. Westcott and Hort, together with their friend Stanley, were instrumental in getting the Unitarian Christ-rejecter George Vance Smith on the ERV translation committee, and when an outcry was made by Anglican ministers against the Unitarian’s presence on the committee, these men threatened to resign unless he remained.

e. Westcott and Hort were lovers of the heretics Plato and Origen.

(1) Westcott had a particular love for Origen.

(a) Arthur Westcott said of his father: “My father’s promised contributions, however, were completed; the most important being his articles on the Alexandrian divines, including Clement, Demetrius, Dionysius, and greatest of all, Origen. For many years the works of Origen were close to his hand, and he continually turned to them at every opportunity” (*Life of Westcott*, Vol. 1, pp. 319-320).

(b) Westcott published an article on Origen in 1878. This appeared in Westcott’s *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*.

(c) Westcott said, “Never perhaps have two such men as Clement and Origen contributed in successive generations to build up a Christian Church in wisdom and humility” (Westcott, *On the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 354).

(2) John Burgon had a different and a wiser opinion of Origen -- “...licentious and rash Editors of Scripture,--among whom was Origen may be regarded as a prime offender,--must have deliberately introduced into their recensions many an unauthorized gloss, and so given it an extended circulation” (Burgon, *The Causes of Corruption of the Traditional Text*, p. 98).

- (3) Westcott and Hort both loved the writings of Philo, the Gnostic Jew of Alexandria. Hort read Philo more than any other author (*The Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. II, p. 485). Westcott said he was anxious to learn all he could of Philo (*The Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 233) and published an article on Plato in 1866.
- f. Westcott and Hort were lifelong members of the radical and very liberal company called the Apostles society at Cambridge.
- (1) The Apostles society was powerfully influenced by the Unitarian philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge. “Coleridge’s influence at Cambridge was promoted by the formation of the Apostles’ Club (for conversation, dining, exchanging of ideas) to which Maurice, Hare, Sterling, and Connop Thirlwall belonged in the late 1820s. Just twenty years later Westcott and Hort were in their turn members as well” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, pp. 12, 14). Maurice was convicted of heresy. Sterling adopted the heresies of German modernist F.C. Baur. Thirlwall denied the supernatural inspiration of Scripture and even doubted the existence of God.
  - (2) It was liberal F.D. Maurice who persuaded Hort to join the Apostles society (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I, pp. 196, 198). Throughout his years of work as in editing the Greek New Testament and translating the English Bible, Hort maintained his affiliation with this very liberal society.
  - (3) The Apostles society had the objective of a socialist peace on earth. “The Apostles had hoped that developments in the social sciences would before long make possible an equitable and frictionless society” (Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research*, 1968, p. 318).
  - (4) Apostles member Henry Sedgwick, like Maurice, was exceedingly liberal in his theology, and his biographer claimed that the Apostles society had the most profound effect in setting him on his liberal course (Gauld, p. 49).
  - (5) J.B. Lightfoot, who joined Westcott and Hort on the English Revised Version translation committee, was also a member of the Apostles society.
- g. Hort was strongly influenced by the Unitarian transcendentalist Samuel Taylor Coleridge and modernist F.D. Maurice.
- (1) We have seen that Westcott and Hort were influenced by Coleridge and Maurice in the Apostles society at Cambridge.

- (2) In 1847 Hort recorded in his diary the dates of Coleridge's birth and death, and his biographer says, "... the Poet-Philosopher's works became the subject of deep and careful study." Hort published an *Essay on Coleridge* in 1856 as a Cambridge graduate student, "which was a detailed and sympathetic exposition of Coleridge's ideas" (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 15). "The very next year, when Westcott and Hort began work on a Greek New Testament, it was therefore just those manuscripts which had been most heavily corrupted by pagan Neoplatonic thought, B and Aleph, that were settled on" (Sightler, p. 15).
- (3) Hort's biography contains many references to his attachment to Maurice, calling Maurice "the well known radical." Hort's biographer admits that Maurice's "teaching was the most powerful element in his religious development" (*Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I, p. 242; see also pp. 41-42, 61, 64, 67, 76, 83, 92, 98, 105-106, 196, 198). Maurice was expelled from King's College in 1853 for heretical doctrines. On that occasion Westcott showed his own liberal colors by likening evangelical Christians who opposed Maurice's modernism to persecuting Muslims (*Life and Letters of Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 229). Hort said: "He [Charles Kingsley, author of *The Saints Tragedy*] has also dealt a manly blow at the central lie of Calvinism, viz. that man's natural state is diabolical; in short he seems a man quite after Maurice's own heart, and, it is to be hoped, will prove a valuable ally to him in the glorious war that he is waging against shams of all descriptions" (Hort, *Life and Letters of Hort*, Vol. II, p. 64).
- h. Westcott was exceedingly clever in the statement of his heresies and ordinarily refused to state things plainly. He acknowledged that those of his party hid their views so as to avoid "persecution" (*Life and Letters of Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 229). After studying Westcott's writings, Dr. Donald Waite observed: "Westcott's attack on the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is not by any means a direct clash of out-and-and denial, but rather AN ADROIT, SKILLFUL, OBLIQUE UNDERMINING of the bodily resurrection of Christ BY MEANS OF A RE-DEFINITION OF TERMS" (Waite, *Westcott's Denial of Bodily Resurrection*). Writing in 1922, modernistic textual critic Kirsopp Lake stated: "Bishop Westcott is really the author of the great change [in the doctrine of the resurrection]. He entirely abandoned belief in the resurrection of the flesh as formulated in the creed; BUT HE NEVER SAID SO. On the contrary he used all HIS MATCHLESS POWERS OF SHADING LANGUAGE, so that the change from white to black appeared inevitable, natural, indeed, SCARCELY PERCEPTIBLE" (Lake, *Immortality and the Modern Mind*, pp. 38-40).
- i. Finally, we give the evidence from Hort's own fear that his doctrinal views would be made public before they could publish their Greek Testament. The following

statement, which Hort wrote to Westcott in 1861, speaks for itself: “This may sound cowardice--I have a craving that our Text [their critical New Testament] should be cast upon the world before we deal with MATTERS LIKELY TO BRAND US WITH SUSPICION. I mean a text issued by men who are already known for what WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE TREATED AS DANGEROUS HERESY will have great difficulty in finding its way to regions which it might otherwise hope to reach and whence it would not be easily banished by subsequent alarms. ... If only we speak our minds, we shall not be able to avoid giving grave offence to the miscalled orthodoxy of the day” (Hort, *Life and Letters of Hort*, Vol. I, pp, 421, 445). [COMMENT: Hort understood perfectly well that his and Westcott’s doctrinal views were heretical and he feared that their heretical reputation would become well known and thus hinder the reception of their critical Greek text. Here we see why Westcott and Hort generally stated their heresies in obscure terminology. Hort also understood that if they could gain acceptance for their text, it would become very difficult for it to be banished at a later time, and this is exactly what has happened.]

**CHARLES HODGE (1797-1878), ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER HODGE (1823-1886) and BENJAMIN BRECKINRIDGE WARFIELD (1851-1921)**

1. Like Samuel Tregelles, Charles and Alexander Hodge and B.B. Warfield were evangelical popularizers of modern textual criticism. Hodge and Warfield were prominent Presbyterians in America, associated with the influential Princeton Seminary. Hodge alone trained 3,000 Presbyterian ministers.

2. The adoption of textual criticism by the Hodges and Warfield built upon the groundwork laid from the inception of Princeton. When he was only 14 years old, Charles Hodge heard and was moved by Archibald Alexander’s message at his installation as Princeton’s first professor in August 12, 1812. Hodge said that he “remembered it vividly years later” (David Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, Vol. 1, p. 33). In his inaugural sermon, Alexander encouraged the use of textual criticism. “For though the serious mind is at first astonished and confounded, upon being informed of the multitude of various readings ... yet it is relieved, when on careful examination it appears that not more than one of a hundred of these, makes the slightest variation in the sense, and that the whole of them do not materially affect one important fact or doctrine.” Thus Princeton, from its inception, bought into the myths that modern textual criticism is not a doctrinal issue, that the Alexandrian text has no effect upon the doctrine of the New Testament, and that the textual changes are few and largely insignificant.

3. Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield were educated at the feet of German modernists for the sake of obtaining scholarly credentials, and it was there that they picked up the modern textual criticism virus.

a. Hodge paved the way, building on what he had learned from Alexander.

- (1) Hodge took a leave of absence from Princeton from 1825-28 and studied under Tholuck, Neander, and Schleiermacher in Germany. “Hodge was the first to take up German naturalistic text criticism and abandon the doctrine of providential preservation. ... Hodge returned to Princeton still orthodox but accepting of the text critical ideas of Griesbach. This happened despite Hodge’s familiarity with [Frederick] Nolan’s refutation of Griesbach published in 1815” (James Sightler, “The Influence of Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield on Acceptance of Naturalistic Text Criticism in America,” delivered at the Dean Burgon Society’s annual meeting, May 23, 1991; reprinted in *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 43).
  - (2) As early as 1834, Hodge wrote a favorable review of Lachmann’s Greek New Testament and theories, even though Lachmann treated the Bible like any other ancient book.
  - (3) In his commentary on Romans, first written in the 1830s and revised in the 1860s, Hodge accepted many of the findings of modern textual criticism and was often willing to throw out the Received Text in its favor.
  - (4) In his *Systematic Theology*, published in 1871-2, Hodge stated his belief that the Received Greek New Testament contained errors and discrepancies.
- b. Warfield studied at Princeton under Hodge from 1873-76 and was advised by Hodge to go to Leipzig, Germany, for further study. Philip Schaff gave the letter of introduction to the Leipzig faculty. “Such a letter of introduction in those days put the faculty (at Leipzig) under an obligation to take the prospective student under their wing and to provide for any personal or academic request of the candidate. Remember that Leipzig was where Tischendorf did his work and where Codex Sinaiticus had first been published in 1862. So it was a natural and adroit move on the part of Hodge and Schaff to send such a promising twenty-five year old young man, who they hoped would continue their critical methods, to study under the Leipzig faculty” (Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 50).
4. Hodge took a relatively tolerant, middle-of-the-road approach to the battle against modernism in the Presbyterian denomination.
- a. Hodge was opposed to the division between Old School and New School segments of the Presbyterian Church. When Robert J. Breckenridge published *The Act and Testimony* in 1834, which boldly exposed the modernism and heresy of the New School (such as denying the propitiatory atonement of Christ), Hodge refused to endorse it publicly. This document became the basis for the dismissal of the New School churches from the denomination in 1837, but Hodge was opposed to the disruption (Sightler, p. 45).

- b. In 1854, Hodge reviewed Philip Schaff's book on church history, and though he noted the anti-protestant, Romanizing nature of the Mercersburg Theology that Schaff represented, Hodge did not brand Schaff the heretic that he was (Hodge, "Dr. Schaff's Apostolic Church," *Princeton Review*, V. 26, 1854).
- c. It was under Hodge's leadership that the Old School and New School Presbyterians were re-united in 1869 "without any assurance of doctrinal firmness from the New School party" (Sightler, p. 47).
- d. In 1871 Hodge came out in support of the revision of the English Bible along the lines proposed by the textual critics. He predicted that important doctrinal passages (e.g., the last 12 verses of Mark, Jn. 5:3-4; Jn. 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:37; 9:5-6; "God" in 1 Tim. 3:16; "blood" in Acts 20:28; the Trinitarian statement in 1 Jn. 5:7) would be omitted or changed, but he was not concerned. Though these had been in the English Bible for hundreds of years and though they were in the common Greek and Latin texts and had been prominently used by God's people to defend the faith against the assault of heretics, he called them "unnecessary supports" (Hodge, "The Proposed Revision of the English Bible," *Princeton Review*, V, 43, 1871).
- e. Hodge even accepted Schaff's invitation in 1871 to join the American Standard Version translation committee. Though Hodge was too ill to participate by the time the work started in 1872, "his name and prestige were lent to the movement for revision" (Sightler, p. 49). In fact, in *The Revised New Testament and History of Revision* by Isaac Hall (Philadelphia, 1881), Hodge is listed as one of the members of the New Testament committee who was "lost by death." The fact that Unitarians and theological modernists graced the committee did not cause Hodge to renounce the project. 2 John 8-11 is directly applicable to this sad situation.

5. Charles Hodge was succeeded at Princeton by his son Archibald Alexander Hodge, whose *Outlines of Theology* became a standard doctrinal textbook in Presbyterian and even some Baptist schools (e.g., Spurgeon's Preacher's College). It was first published in 1860 and enlarged and revised in 1879, during the eight years that Hodge taught at Princeton. Alexander Hodge's *Theology* was smaller than his father's and was possibly used more widely.

- a. On "The Inspiration of the Bible," A.A. Hodge left the historic Protestant doctrine as expressed in the 1648 Westminster Confession of Faith and claimed that the Scripture is inspired and infallible only "IN THE ORIGINAL AUTOGRAPHS." This is repeated twice (pp. 66, 67).
- b. Though Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* is thorough in its treatment of Bible doctrine, it contains nothing on the doctrine of the preservation of Scripture, not even a hint. He deals with providential preservation, but only as it applies to creation, never to the Scripture. In regard to creation, Hodge defines providence as "foresight, and

then a careful arrangement prepared beforehand for the accomplishment of predetermined ends” (Chapter XIV, “Providence,” p. 258). That would be a good definition of the doctrine of divine preservation of Holy Scripture, but it is never so applied by Hodge. Of course, such a doctrine of preservation is in direct conflict with the foundational theories of modern textual criticism, which Hodge accepted.

- c. When Hodge quotes the Westminster Confession under the section on “The Inspiration of the Bible,” he quotes only a statement on the authority of Scripture and does not allow the Westminster Confession to speak on inspiration and preservation, which would have shown that he was changing the standard Protestant doctrine (*Outlines of Theology*, p. 81). He leaves out the following important statement from the Confession: “The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and by His singular care and providence, KEPT PURE in all ages, are therefore AUTHENTICAL; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”
- d. The above omission is more interesting when we see what Hodge had to say on page 75 of his *Theology*: “The Church has never held the verbal infallibility of our translations, nor the perfect accuracy of the copies of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures now possessed by us. These copies confessedly contain many ‘discrepancies’ resulting from frequent transcription.” In fact, the Westminster Confession of 1648, as previously quoted, held exactly this, because it was referring to the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Scriptures that its authors were holding in their hands. Hodge was therefore changing the doctrine of the Scripture commonly held by God’s people prior to his time. By bringing up the issue of “discrepancies,” Hodge was building a strawman. The Baptists and Protestants of the Reformation era understood that there are differences within the manuscript record, that the manuscripts contain various types of scribal mistakes and even heretical attacks, but they also understood that such errors could be weeded out by a simple comparison of manuscripts and versions and that the preserved Word of God would generally be found in the majority of surviving witnesses.
- e. Like so many evangelicals since, Alexander Hodge bought into the myths of modern textual criticism and promoted them as fact. He was thus an evangelical face to the rationalism underlying textual criticism. He said, for example, that “the differences [between texts and manuscripts] are found to be unimportant, and the essential integrity of our text is established” (A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, 1869; reprinted, London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961, p. 41). It is “unimportant” to remove the last 12 verses of Mark and “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement from 1 John 5:7 and to have Jesus speaking a lie in John 7:8



and the hundreds of other changes that most obviously reflect an assault upon traditional Bible doctrine? I can understand J. Griesbach and G. Vance Smith and Kurt Aland and Bruce Metzger saying this, but why would an alleged Bible believer repeat it? And how can he say that the “essential integrity of our text is established” when the textual critics have radically overturned the text used by the churches throughout most of the church age? To claim that the apostolic text was rejected in the 4th century and not “recovered” until the late 19th, as modern textual criticism does, how can this be a settling of the text? Such a thing has dramatic doctrinal ramifications.

6. B.B. Warfield, as Charles Hodge Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, succeeded A.A. Hodge at Princeton. He was there from 1887 until his death in 1921.

- a. Warfield used A.A. Hodge’s *Outline of Theology* as his textbook, and Warfield further popularized Hodge’s doctrine that the Scripture is inspired and infallible only in the originals and that divine preservation is not a doctrine.
- b. In 1886 Warfield published *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, in which he ignored divine preservation and exalted the rationalistic Griesbach-Westcott-Hort approach to the text. This was the first textbook on Textual Criticism written by an American. Warfield’s influence in promoting textual criticism is recognized in Calhoun’s history of Princeton: “His positive attitude toward textual criticism influenced many to appreciate the science and to value the new translations of the Bible based upon its work” (David Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, Vol. 2, “The Majestic Testimony 1869-1929,” pp. 113-14).

7. “The tiny seed of toleration of error planted by Hodge and his colleagues at Princeton grew into the liberal tree that shaded the development of modernism in the Presbyterian Church in the 20th century and crushed J. Gresham Machen, who you recall was the first man in history to be tried and convicted of orthodoxy. The sad and ironic thing is that, when he was forced out of Princeton, Machen took with him to Westminster Theological Seminary the Westcott-Hort view of the New Testament, and Westminster eventually became the birthplace of the NIV. Virtually every major fundamental seminary in America has been tainted with this Princeton leaven through people who trained at Princeton under Hodge and his sons or Warfield. Boyce, Manly, and A.T. Robertson among Southern Baptists come immediately to mind as well as C.D. Brokenshire, who trained at Princeton during Warfield’s tenure in the early 1900’s and was Dean of Religion at Bob Jones University through the 1940’s. Dallas Theological Seminary and Tennessee Temple also have not escaped this Princeton influence. It is high time for fundamentalism to call a halt to naturalistic text criticism in its own ranks” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 192, pp. 49, 50).

- a. The Baptist A.T. Robertson dedicated his 1925 *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* to Hodge of Princeton.

- b. Bruce Metzger, one of the most influential textual critics of the 20th century, was trained at Princeton.

8. It is important to understand that there were Presbyterian leaders in that day who were resisting modern textual criticism as staunchly as the Hodges and Warfield were promoting it. Consider two examples:

a. Robert Jefferson Breckinridge (1800-1871)

- (1) Breckinridge was an Old School Presbyterian leader. They were so-called because they stood in the old Protestant doctrinal paths and refused to accept the New School novelties that were flowing from Germany. In 1834, Breckinridge wrote *The Act and Testimony*, which enumerated the errors of liberal New Haven Theology which had entered the Presbyterian Church under the Plan of Union (with the Congregationalists) of 1801. “New Haven Theology denied the imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity and advocated the moral influence theory of atonement rather than the orthodox satisfaction theory. It also denied the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the sinner who believes and therefore saw salvation as mere pardon and not as justification, as a process rather than a sudden, miraculous event” (James H. Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, p. 44). This document became the basis for a division between the Old and New Schools in 1837.
- (2) “Breckinridge was chairman of the Republican Convention in 1864 which renominated Lincoln. ... Breckinridge and his brother John, who was also a Presbyterian minister (Old School), were ardently conservative and were famous for their debates with Catholic antagonists” (Sightler, p. 50).
- (3) Breckinridge fought against the Bible revision produced by the American Bible Society in 1856. It claimed to be a mere update of language but actually proceeded along critical lines. For example, 1 John 5:7 was placed in brackets and “God” was replaced with “He who” in 1 Timothy 3:16. “The committee included Richard Storrs, John McClintock, Gardiner Spring, and John Dewitt (Dewitt in 1871 was chosen to serve on the American N.T. Committee by Schaff), but the actual work was done by an obscure New School Presbyterian pastor, James W. McLane, of Williamsburgh, N.Y.” (Sightler, p. 45). Breckinridge published a pamphlet against the ABS revision and “organized the opposition at the Presbyterian General Assembly (Old School) of 1857, and forced the A.B.S. to drop this new translation” (Sightler, p. 45).
- (4) Note the following excerpt: “It seemed to me that the time had fully come, for the friends of the Bible, as it is, to speak once more. ... Does anyone suppose that a question of conscience touching the integrity of the word of God, can be given up by Christian people even to avoid trouble in the church of God, much less

trouble with a secular society? ... The word of God is, next to the Spirit itself, the most precious gift of Christ to his church; and if the church has any clear duty upon earth, one duty is to preserve that Divine Word in purity ... and here is a new standard English Bible, changed ... in somewhere about 24,000 particulars ... we are told they have discovered ... in the text and punctuation alone ... and then they distinctly assert, that of all these 24,000 variations ... there is not one which mars the integrity of the text, or affects any doctrine or precept of the Bible ... THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE PROCEDURE HAS BEEN UNDERTAKEN AND CARRIED THROUGH, ARE PERILOUS IN THE HIGHEST DEGREE ... THE RESULTS REACHED ARE EVIL, AND ONLY EVIL” (Robert Breckinridge, *The American Bible Society’s Committee on Versions and Its New Bible*, Danville, KY, Robert J. Breckinridge, Oct. 30, 1857, pp. 4-7).

We would make the following observations on this statement:

- (a) We see that the textual critics of Breckinridge’s day made the same claim that they make today, that their criticism does not affect doctrine, and we also see, with great encouragement, that there were men of God who did not buy this argument.
  - (b) Further, we see that those who defended the Traditional Text in that day were under pressure to keep quiet in order to “avoid trouble in the church of God.” The same pressure is brought to bear against the defenders of the Traditional Text today.
  - (c) Breckinridge was convinced that the duty to take a stand for the Bible text was preeminent -- “if the church has any clear duty upon earth, one duty is to preserve that Divine Word in purity.” We could not agree more strongly.
  - (d) Breckinridge was convinced that the principles of modern textual criticism were both perilous and evil.
- b. Robert L. Dabney (1820-1898) was another Presbyterian in America who stood against the critical text in the 19th century.
- (1) Dabney taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1853 to 1883 and pastored the College Church during most of those years. He contributed to a number of publications, including *the Central Presbyterian*, the *Presbyterian Critic*, and the *Southern Presbyterian*. His last years were spent with the Austin School of Theology in Texas, a university he co-founded. Dabney boldly withstood the apostasy that was creeping in on every side in this day. His biographer called him “a soldier until death, at war with much in his age” (Thomas Cary Johnson, *The Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*). Dabney warned that Evangelicals (such as Charles and Alexander Hodge) who were accepting modern textual

criticism had adopted it “from the mint of infidel rationalism” (Dabney, *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

- (2) Dabney published a perceptive article titled “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek.” He described the attempts of textual critics such as Griesbach and Tischendorf to reject the Greek Received Text and to replace it with the Alexandrian text. Dabney showed that the changes made in the text favored Unitarianism. He opposed the striking textual changes which were being proposed in his day—changes which have appeared in all of the modern English versions since 1881. He understood the theological corruption of the critical text, and he traced these corruptions to second- and third-century heretics. He understood that scholarship is not synonymous with wisdom and spiritual discernment. He knew the fickleness of modern biblical scholarship. He understood that the modern theories of textual criticism are founded upon conjecture and rationalism, not absolute truth and biblical faith.
- (3) Dabney defended the apostolic authenticity of passages such as Matthew 6:13; John 8:1-11; Acts 8:37; 9:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 1:11, as they stand in the Received Text.
- (4) Dabney believed the Alexandrian text was corrupted by heretics in the 4th century. “THE SIGNIFICANT FACT TO WHICH WE WISH ESPECIALLY TO CALL ATTENTION IS THIS: THAT ALL THE VARIATIONS PROPOSED ON THE FAITH OF THESE MANUSCRIPTS WHICH HAVE ANY DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE, SHOULD ATTACK THE ONE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY; nay, we may say even more specifically, the one doctrine of Christ’s deity. ... Their admirers [of the favored manuscripts supporting the critical text] claim for them an origin in the fourth or fifth century. The Sabellian and Arian controversies raged in the third and fourth. Is there no coincidence here? Things do not happen again and again regularly without a cause. ... And when we remember the date of the great Trinitarian contest, and compare it with the supposed date of these exemplars of the sacred text, the ground of suspicion becomes violent. ... THESE VARIATIONS ARE TOO NUMEROUS, AND TOO SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ONE DOCTRINE, TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHANCE. ... there are strong probable grounds to conclude, that the text of the Scriptures current in the East received a mischievous modification at the hands of the famous ORIGEN, which has not been usually appreciated” (Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871; reprinted in *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, 1890, pp. 350-389).

## PHILIP SCHAFF (1819-1893)

1. Schaff, a prominent textual critic and translator, was chairman of the American Standard Version translation committee.

2. Twice Schaff was brought to trial for heresy while teaching at the German Reformed Church Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, from 1844 to 1863. His first public address in America in 1844 “was so Romish, that, when it was translated into English and published, it produced a storm of criticism, and brought forth accusations of Romanizing and Tractarian tendencies” (George Coy, *The Inside Story of the Anglo American Revised New Testament*, 1973, p. 89). Failing to obtain the dismissal of Schaff from the seminary at Mercersburg, two Reformed groups (the Reformed Dutch Church and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church) separated themselves from the German Reformed Church “on account of her countenance of these works and their authors” (*New Brunswick Review*, August 1854). Schaff had adopted the German modernistic view of “organic development” taught by the Tuebingen School, that “the church as the literal body of Christ on earth progressively apprehended higher truth but was always infallible and authoritative at any point in time” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translation*, 1992, p. 9). Schaff did not reject the Roman Catholic Church as apostate but looked favorably upon it and believed it had a bright future. Schaff’s liberal views eventually forced him to move to Union Seminary, which was a hotbed of theological heresy.

3. Consider some excerpts from *The Life of Philip Schaff* by his son, David S. Schaff:

- a. [Schaff’s description of his visit to the Franciscan monastery of St. Francis in 1841] “In the chapel is the picture of the Madonna, who often spoke with St. Francis. ... From the door of this chapel he preached to the birds, and opposite is the tree on which they perched and listened” (p. 56). [COMMENT: Schaff describes these Catholic fables as if there were true.]
- b. [Schaff’s description of his audience with Pope Gregory XVI in 1841] “Passing through a door we found ourselves in the beautiful but plain sitting room of HIS HOLINESS, who was clad in white. ... It was hard for me to KISS HIS RED SLIPPER. ... He is certainly a good man. He gave me his blessing and I went out quite satisfied from his presence” (pp. 53, 54). [COMMENT: Note that Philip Schaff addressed the Pope by his blasphemous title, kissed his slipper, and received his blessing with satisfaction. Beginning with a decree he passed in 1836, Pope Gregory XVI had railed against the Bible societies and the free distribution of Scripture. In fact, this Pope placed the Bible societies at the top of the list of “the enemies of Catholicism.” One of Gregory’s encyclicals eulogized Pope Innocent III, the father of the brutal inquisition, and ordered the Catholic hierarchy, “TO REMOVE FROM THE HANDS OF THE FAITHFUL ALIKE THE BIBLES IN THE VULGAR TONGUE WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PRINTED CONTRARY TO THE

DECREES ABOVE MENTIONED OF THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFFS, and every book proscribed and condemned...” (Encyclical against Bible societies, Gregory XVI, cited from D.B. Ray, *The Papal Controversy*, p. 481).]

- c. “Over this confession and the confession ‘I believe in one holy Catholic Apostolic Church’ I GLADLY EXTEND TO YOU AND TO EVERY PIOUS CATHOLIC THE HAND. It may seem strange to you, if it does not appear to be an inexplicable inconsistency, that ONE CAN BE AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME A CHILD AND SERVANT OF PROTESTANTISM AND AN ADMIRER AND FRIEND OF CATHOLICISM. This is not, it is true, the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, but I hope it may yet become the Protestantism of the nineteenth. At the same time, I hope and pray that the Romanism which in the sixteenth century drove forth from its bosom thousands of its active and energetic children with the most terrible curses ... will approach Protestantism in the spirit of intercessory love and will go before it with a shining illustration of charity ... THEN THE HOUR FOR THE REUNION OF THE SUNDERED PARTS WILL STRIKE ... Then shall we be prepared for the coming of the Lord in His glory” (Schaff, writing to a Catholic editor, 1853, pp. 200, 201). [COMMENT: Schaff was a forerunner of the unscriptural ecumenical movement of the 20th century, and the false charity that he longed for was fulfilled in Vatican Council II. To be a friend of the truth and a friend of error at the same time is impossible, but this delusion is the ecumenical philosophy and dream. The New Testament tells us plainly that the coming of the Lord is preceded by general apostasy rather than revival. See Mat. 24:4, 24; Luke 18:8; 2 Thess. 2:6-12; 2 Tim. 3:1-13; 4:3-4.]
- d. “The DOCTRINE OF THE REAL PRESENCE taught by Calvin and as set forth by Dr. Nevin, Dr. Schaff continued to defend in his later years” (p. 217). [COMMENT: Schaff accepted something very close to the Roman Catholic myth.]
- e. [When Schaff came to America in 1844] “German theology was subject to suspicion, and American students were everywhere warned against attending German universities. He lived to witness a great change in these respects, and TO THIS CHANGE OF SENTIMENT HE MADE HIS OWN CONTRIBUTION” (p. 218). [COMMENT: The general sentiment against German theology that dominated American schools and churches in the mid-19th century was wise, based as it was upon resistance to heresy. That Schaff helped break down these barriers is to his shame, as it set the stage for German modernism to flood into American seminaries in the 20th century.]
- f. “[Schaff] did not share the view that the day of the Roman Catholic Church was at an end. Nor was it at any time his opinion that there were any reasonable indications that it would cease to exist. As little did he expect that it would be absorbed or

transformed by Protestantism. His hope was that reforms might, under the guidance of Providence, start from within its bosom, and A NEW ERA OF DOCTRINE AND ECCLESIASTICAL PRACTICE BE USHERED IN BY THE ACTION OF SOME FUTURE INCUMBENT OF THE SEE OF ST. PETER or of an ecumenical council” (p. 258). [COMMENT: The end of the Roman Catholic Church is described in Revelation 17 and it does not end in “reform”!]

4. Schaff worked closely with modernists and Unitarians. He was a forerunner of today’s ecumenical leaders. While not personally accepting the more extreme modernistic views of the Scripture, he refused to separate from those who did. Though he was not a Unitarian he fellowshiped closely with Unitarians. Schaff was in charge of selecting the American revision committee that included at least two Unitarians who denied the Trinitarian God of the Bible. One was Ezra Abbot, who was a close friend of Schaff and was warmly mentioned in the introduction to Schaff’s church history.

5. Schaff participated in the Parliament of Religions at the Chicago World’s Fair, 1893, and “was so happy among the Buddhists, Confucians, Shintos and other world religions, that he said he would be willing to die among them” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*).

#### **EZRA ABBOT (1819-1884)**

1. Abbot, a Harvard theology professor and an influential textual critic, was on the American Standard Version (ASV) translation committee (1901). “He has assisted on Smith’s *Bible Dictionary*, Noyes’ *New Testament*, and many other critical works, besides being a frequent contributor to the reviews, magazines, etc.”

- a. Consider the testimony of Matthew Riddle, another member of the ASV translation committee: “Dr. Abbot was the foremost textual critic in America, and his opinions usually prevailed when questions of text were debated” (Matthew Riddle, *The Story of the Revised New Testament*, 1908, p. 30). Matthew Riddle’s testimony is very important, as he was one of the most influential members of the ASV committee and one of the few members who survived to see the translation printed.
- b. Consider the testimony of the ASV committee upon the death of Abbot on March 21, 1884. The following excerpt from a memorial resolution issued by the committee gives additional evidence of this Unitarian’s influence on the Revision on both sides of the ocean: “Always one of the first in his place at the table, and one of the last to quit it, he [Ezra Abbot] brought with him thither the results of careful preparation. His suggestions were seldom the promptings of the moment. Hence they always commanded consideration; often secured instant adoption. ... But it was in questions affecting the Greek text that Dr. Abbot’s exceptional gifts and attainments were pre-eminently helpful. Several of his essays on debated passages, appended to the

printed reports of our proceedings which were forwarded from time to time to the brethren in England, are among the most thorough discussions of the sort which are extant, won immediate respect for American scholarship in this department, and HAD NO SMALL INFLUENCE IN DETERMINING THAT FORM OF THE SACRED TEXT WHICH WILL ULTIMATELY, WE BELIEVE, FIND ACCEPTANCE WITH ALL CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS” (*Historical Account of the Work of the American Committee of Revision*, 1885, p. 68). Here is the plain admission that the critical Greek text owes much to Unitarians.

2. Abbot was a Christ-denier.

- a. He authored the footnotes in the ASV that say that Christ should not be worshipped and that question his deity. For example, at John 9:38, the wicked footnote states, “The Greek word denotes an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature (as here) or to the Creator.” I cite this from an edition of the 1901 ASV that I have in my library.
- b. He argued that the last clause of Romans 9:5 was a doxology to God and does not refer to Christ.
- c. In Acts 20:28 Abbot led the committee to remove “God” and replace it with “the Lord,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. Unitarians and theological modernists and even Jehovah’s Witnesses alleged that Jesus is “the Lord” but they deny that He is actually God.
- d. Abbot wrote a long article arguing for the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16.

**JOSEPH HENRY THAYER (1828-1901)**

1. Thayer was on the American Standard Version translation team (recording secretary of the New Testament committee) and was the translator and reviser of the Greek Lexicon by Carl Ludwig Grimm and Christian Gottlob Wilke that bears his name today.
2. Thayer was a Harvard professor of New Testament criticism. He was the assistant to Unitarian Ezra Abbot at Harvard and succeeded him in 1884 as Bussey professor of New Testament criticism and interpretation at the Harvard Divinity School
3. Like Abbot, Thayer was a Unitarian who denied the deity of Jesus Christ and the infallibility of Scripture.
  - a. The Publishers Introduction to the Thayer’s Lexicon gave this warning: “A word of caution is necessary. Thayer was a Unitarian, and the errors of this sect occasionally come through in the explanatory notes. The reader should be alert for both subtle and blatant denials of such doctrines as the Trinity (Thayer regarded Christ as a mere man and the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force emanating from God), the



inherent and total depravity of fallen human nature, the eternal punishment of the wicked, and Biblical inerrancy. When defining *metamelomai* [the Greek word for regret], Thayer refuses to draw a clear distinction between this word and *metanoeo* [the Greek word for repentance]. Underlying this refusal is the view that man is inherently good, needing Christ not as a Savior but only as an example” (Publishers Introduction, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, page vii, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House).

- b. In his definition of “theos” (“God”), Thayer wrote: “Whether Christ is called God must be determined from Jn. i. 1; xx. 28; I Jn. v. 20; Ro. ix. 5; Tit. ii. 13; Heb. i. 8 sq., etc.; THE MATTER IS STILL IN DISPUTE AMONG THEOLOGIANs; cf. Grimm, *Institutio theologiae dogmaticae*, ed. 2, p. 228 sqq. [and the discussion (on Ro. ix. 5) by Professors Dwight and [Ezra] Abbot in *Journ. Soc. Bib. Lit.* etc. u. s., esp. pp. 42 sqq. 113 sqq.].” Here Thayer refers his readers to the writings of the Unitarian Ezra Abbot, who boldly denied the Godhood of Jesus Christ.
- c. Prior to his tenure at Harvard, Thayer was a professor at Andover Seminary, but resigned in 1882 in protest to Andover’s requirement of “a rigid assent to the letter of the Creed” (Ernest Gordon, *The Leaven of the Sadducees*, 1926, p. 145).

### **CHARLES AUGUSTUS BRIGGS (1841-1913)**

1. Briggs was a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and the co-author (with Francis Brown and Samuel Rolles Driver) of the *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (completed 1906). The *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon* (also called *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*) is based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (known as “the father of modern Hebrew lexicography”) as translated by Edward Robinson. This lexicon has wielded vast influence in biblical studies in spite of the rank modernism of its authors.

2. Briggs was a theological modernist. In fact, he was defrocked by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. because of his liberal views of the Bible.

- a. In November 1890, Briggs was appointed to the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology at Union Seminary.
- b. On January 20, 1891, Briggs delivered his inaugural address entitled “The Authority of the Holy Scripture.” It was a bold assault upon the Bible. He proposed three “great fountains of divine authority” -- the Bible, the Church, and Human Reason; thus denying that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and one-Isaiah authorship of Isaiah. He questioned the Bible’s miracles. He claimed that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy were two of the “barriers” that hindered a proper approach to the

Bible. Another alleged barrier was “minute prediction,” and under this point Briggs attacked Scripture’s predictive prophecy.

- c. Briggs was charged with heresy and in June 1893 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church found Briggs guilty and suspended him from the ministry.
- d. Standing behind their heretic, Union Seminary declared its independence from the mother denomination and Briggs stayed on as Professor of Biblical Theology.
- e. In 1899 Briggs was received into the ministry of the Episcopal Church in America.

### **SAMUEL ROLLES DRIVER (1846-1914)**

1. Driver was an influential Hebrew scholar and textual critic. He was Regius Professor of Hebrew and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. From 1876 to 1884 he was a member of the Old Testament translation committee for the English Revised Version. He authored *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891) and collaborated with Charles Briggs and Francis Brown in a revision of the Hebrew lexicon compiled by F.H.W. Gesenius. The *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon* (also called *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*) is based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (known as “the father of modern Hebrew lexicography”) as translated by Edward Robinson. This lexicon has wielded vast influence in biblical studies in spite of the rank modernism of its authors.

2. Driver’s theological modernism was evident in his writings. The Briggs and Driver Hebrew lexicon is founded upon the unbelieving, Christ-denying J.E.D.P. theory of Old Testament interpretation. (Briggs was convicted of heresy and dismissed from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.)

- a. Driver used his pen to fight against men who defended the historicity and infallibility of Scripture, such as Professor James Robertson of Glasgow (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: Historical Studies 1860-1960*, p. 120).
- b. In 1911, Driver collaborated with A.F. Kirkpatrick on *The Higher Criticism*, concluding that the Old Testament was the product of natural rather than supernatural forces. In this book Driver “scorns the idea of verbal inspiration and contends that the process of inspiration did not assure freedom from ‘imperfection, error, and mistake in matters of fact’” (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation*, pp. 238, 239).
- c. “The Bible is a ‘library,’ showing how men variously gifted by the Spirit of God cast the truth which they received into many different literary forms, as GENIUS

PERMITTED or occasion demanded” (S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1956, p. ix). *COMMENT*: This is a complete denial that the Bible writers wrote under divine inspiration.

- d. “None of the historians of the Bible claim supernatural enlightenment for the materials of their narrative. ... in many parts of these books we have before us TRADITIONS, in which the original representation has been insensibly MODIFIED, and sometimes (especially in the later books) COLOURED BY THE ASSOCIATIONS OF THE AGE IN WHICH THE AUTHOR RECORDING IT LIVED ... some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. x, xi). *COMMENT*: Thus Driver even claimed that the biblical writers doctored historical records.
- e. “[CHRIST] ACCEPTED, AS THE BASIS OF HIS TEACHING, THE OPINIONS RESPECTING THE OLD TESTAMENT CURRENT AROUND HIM: He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents recognised, and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of His life” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xii). *COMMENT*: Thus, according to Driver, the Lord Jesus Christ, Truth incarnate, stated things that He knew were wrong.
- f. “The consensus of so many acute and able [critical] scholars, of different countries, of different communions, trained independently in different schools, and approaching the subject with different theological and intellectual prepossessions, cannot, as some would have us believe, rest upon illusion” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xvii). *COMMENT*: The deluded Bible scholar thought that the majority opinion in scholarship must be right and ignored the Scripture’s warnings about Satan’s activities and end-time apostasy (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:1-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 3; Jude).
- g. “The Book [of Job] cannot be the record of an actual history. ... it is reasonable to suppose that the poet built upon materials handed down to him by tradition, as other dramatists have often done, the Greek tragedians, for instance, and Shakespeare” (Driver, *The Book of Job in the Revised Version*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, pp. x, xi).

#### **FRANCIS BROWN (1849-c. 1917)**

1. Brown was president of the liberal Union Theological Seminary in New York City. After

graduating from Union in 1877 he studied in Berlin and then began his teaching career at Union in 1879. He was appointed Davenport Professor of Hebrew and the Cognate Languages in 1890, and in 1908 he succeeded Charles Cuthbert Hall (1852-1908) as president of Union. He was awarded honorary degrees from the universities of Glasgow, Oxford, Dartmouth, and Yale.

2. Together with Charles Briggs and S.R. Driver, Brown produced a revision of the Hebrew lexicon compiled by F.H.W. Gesenius. The *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon* (also called *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*) is based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (known as “the father of modern Hebrew lexicography”) as translated by Edward Robinson. This lexicon has wielded vast influence in biblical studies in spite of the rank modernism of its authors.

3. Brown was a modernist in his approach to the Bible. As president of Union Seminary in the early 20th century, Brown oversaw one of deepest cesspools of unbelief in America.

- a. Brown supported his friend and co-laborer Charles Briggs when he tore apart the Bible in his inaugural speech at Union in January 1891, upon his appointment to the chair of Biblical Theology. In that address, misnamed “The Authority of the Holy Scripture,” Briggs proposed that the Bible was only one of three “great fountains of divine authority,” the other two being the Church and Human Reason. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and one-Isaiah authorship of Isaiah. He questioned the Bible’s miracles. He claimed that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy were two of the “barriers” that hindered a proper approach to the Bible. Another alleged barrier was “minute prediction,” and under this point Briggs attacked Scripture’s predictive prophecy. Francis Brown stood unhesitatingly with the heretic Briggs because he was likeminded in unbelief.
- b. Brown had a close relationship with another heretic who was condemned by the Presbyterian Church. This was **A.C. MCGIFFERT** (1861-1933), who was co-author with Brown of *The Christian Point of View* (1902). While McGiffert was a professor at Lane Seminary in Pennsylvania, fellow professor Henry Preserved Smith was tried for heresy. McGiffert testified in Smith’s defense in 1892. (Smith was found guilty and suspended.) McGiffert had also supported Charles Briggs in his trial at about that same time. When McGiffert moved to Union Seminary, where his liberal views were welcomed his inaugural address was described as “a direct onslaught on the very basis of Protestant theology.” In 1897, McGiffert publicized his heresy in *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, in which he denied the supernatural inspiration of Scripture and “questioned the genuineness of half the books in the New Testament.” McGiffert claimed that all Christian teaching is relative, that “there is no such thing as Christianity in general,” implied that the Lord Jesus was mistaken in some of his views, and denied that early Christians held the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. The next year, the Presbyterian Church’s General Assembly asked McGiffert to reconsider his views and conform

to the doctrines of the church or to withdraw. McGiffert responded in 1899 with a brazen article in which he denied any church's right to define or enforce orthodox doctrine. The New York Presbytery passed a resolution condemning McGiffert's opinions, and he resigned from the Presbyterian Church in 1900. He joined the Congregational Church and succeeded his fellow liberal and co-laborer Francis Brown as president of Union Seminary (from 1917 to 1926).

## **EBERHARD NESTLE (1851-1913)**

1. Nestle was the editor of an influential Greek New Testament that has become a standard among those committed to the critical text. He was an influential father of modern textual criticism and authored *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1898, 1901).

- a. The Nestle's text, which first appeared in 1895, was based on Tischendorf's 8th edition of 1869-72, Westcott and Hort's edition of 1881, and D. Bernhard Weiss' edition of 1902 (TBS Article No. 56). Tischendorf stayed close to the Sinaiticus, while Westcott and Hort preferred the Vaticanus. Thus the Nestle Text is founded largely upon the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts.
- b. The Nestle's Text has gone through 27 editions and has been widely used in Bible College and seminary classrooms and translation work.
- c. Eberhard's son Erwin Nestle succeeded to the editorship of the Nestle Greek New Testament after Eberhard's death in 1913. Erwin was the editor beginning with the 10th edition of 1914.
- d. In 1950 Kurt Aland became associated with the Nestle project and later editions of the Nestle's are called the *Nestle-Aland* Text.
- e. The Bible Societies have adopted the modern critical Greek text since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1904 the British and Foreign Bible Society for the first time departed from its commitment to the Greek Received Text and issued an edition of the Nestle Text with critical apparatus. In 1966 the United Bible Societies (UBS) published a Greek New Testament that follows the Nestle Text, and it has gone into four editions.

2. Eberhard Nestle denied biblical infallibility.

- a. In his *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* Nestle claimed that it is possible that the authors of the New Testament did not write what they "thought or intended to be read" (p. 23). This is a complete and bold denial of divine inspiration.

- b. Nestle believed the writing of the New Testament was completely happenstance. "Their disappearance [that of the original manuscripts] is readily understood when we consider that the greater portion of the New Testament, viz. the epistles, are occasional writings never intended for publication, while others were meant to have only a limited circulation" (p. 156).
- c. Like most other fathers of modern textual criticism, Nestle believed the Bible was to be treated like any other book. One of his foundational principles was that "... the task and the method [of textual criticism] are the same for all literary productions."

### **HERMANN FREIHERR VON SODEN (1852-1914)**

1. Von Soden was an influential textual scholar who published a widely used critical Greek apparatus. He believed that the original apostolic text had been corrupted by the fourth century into three recensions he called K, H, and I. K corresponded to the Koine text found in the majority of Greek manuscripts. H corresponded to the Westcott-Hort Alexandrian text. I corresponded to a mixed text that was difficult to identify but similar to Westcott-Hort's Western text. This is an open denial of divine preservation.

2. His theological modernism is evident from the following quotes from his writings:

- a. *He followed a false, philosophical, humanistic Christ, denying the true divinity of Jesus.* "He [Christ] could only be, He only wished to be and to offer to others, what He was in Himself!--a personality complete and self-sufficing, whose creative energy proceeded from its God as its only source. His mission was thus defined for Him. He must call into life in the souls of others the treasure of His own soul. He must leave His own impress upon His immediate environment, and through them upon mankind by means of direct personal influence" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, 1907, pp. 2, 3).
- b. *He denied the divine inspiration and perfection of Holy Scripture.* "To this body of scripture the Christians then assigned determining authority, supporting its claims by a peculiar THEORY as to the origin of these writings--THE SO-CALLED doctrine of Inspiration" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, p. 5). "The union of the primitive Christian literature in one book, and the transference to it of the truly MECHANICAL JEWISH DOGMA OF INSPIRATION, early blinded men's eyes and blunted their feelings for the great variety and distinct individuality of the separate works which were now united in one. Still less could there be perceived in these writings a living spirit in full development striving towards yet clearer expression" (Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, p. 7).

3. Though von Soden's is the most extensive collation of the Byzantine manuscripts that has ever been made it was a very partial, insufficient collation. Note the following important testimonies about von Soden's work:

- a. “Von Soden and his assistants collated some hundreds of manuscripts, and published the results in a massive critical edition. In his footnotes, von Soden shows the majority text by the symbol K (short for Koine, or ‘common text’). However, AT ANY GIVEN INSTANCE OF THIS SYMBOL, ONE CAN RARELY BE SURE WHETHER VON SODEN CONSULTED ALL HIS MANUSCRIPTS AT THE PASSAGE IN QUESTION, OR CONSULTED JUST A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE. And even where he does give figures, the resulting total does not constitute a majority of all the manuscripts which are now available” (*Quarterly Record*, Trinitarian Bible Society, Number 482, p. 15).
- b. “Yet von Soden was a rationalist. HE SHOWED VERY LITTLE REGARD TOWARD THE RECEIVED TEXT and sought to rewrite it on the basis of his collations and rather novel theory of textual history. ... We will show that [Hodges and Farstad] have used von Soden very uncritically. We will also show that despite the massive scope of von Soden’s work, it is after all only a very small part of the total picture and cannot begin to be used in the way Hodges and Farstad have attempted” (Jack Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 8).
- c. “Now what needs to be seen here is that anyone who seeks to gather Byzantine MS evidence from the standard sources -- Alford, Tischendorf, Souter, Merk, Vogels, Nestle, Aland, or von Soden -- IS REALLY GETTING ONLY A FEW SCRAPS FROM THE TABLE. The energies of these men have been expended elsewhere. Their labours toward the great mass of Byzantine MSS is limited to those places where there is departure from the TR. ... Therefore Hodges and Farstad have based their edition upon an area of von Soden’s work where he gave the least attention” (Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 11).
- d. Kurt and Barbara Aland, while claiming that von Soden’s apparatus “is a necessary tool for textual critics,” also warn that “von Soden’s apparatus is so unreliable that the reader soon comes to regard this remarkably full apparatus as little more than a collection of variant readings whose attestation needs verification elsewhere. Von Soden’s edition was distinctly a failure” (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 23).

## **RUDOLPH (1853-1929) AND GERHARD KITTEL (1888-1948)**

1. This father-son duo has wielded a vast influence upon biblical scholarship and Bible translation work.
  - a. Rudolf Kittel edited the Hebrew Bible upon which the modern translations, such as the New International, are based. The first two editions of the *Biblia Hebraica* were published in 1906 and 1912. For these Kittel continued to use the same Hebrew text

underlying the King James Bible and other Protestant versions. It is called the Ben Chayyim text for the Jewish rabbi (Jacob ben Hayyim) who first published it in 1524. The majority of extant Hebrew manuscripts support it. But beginning with the third edition (1937), Kittel changed to the Ben Asher text, which is based on the Leningrad Manuscript (L), alleged to be the oldest extant. Applying the modern textual principle of “oldest is best,” Kittel tossed aside the majority Hebrew text, the traditional one that had been in common use, and adopted the minority. Kittel’s 1937 edition differed from the previous ones in about 20,000 points (most very minor) and fueled the trend by modern version translators to reject the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text for modifications based on the a variety of other witnesses, such as ancient Greek, Latin, and Syriac translations and commentaries. The latest edition of Kittel, called *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, appeared in 1966 and 1977 and is published by the German Bible Society and the United Bible Societies.

- b. Gerhard, Rudolf’s son, was also a German professor, theologian, and textual critic. He received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig, where Constantine von Tischendorf was trained. He taught there and at two other schools before moving in 1926 to the University of Tuebingen, which had long been a hotbed of theological modernism. He was the editor of the multi-volume *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (*Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament*), one of the standards in Bible translation and theological work. Kittel died before the work on the dictionary could be completed, and Gerhard Friedrich followed him as editor. The English translation was edited by G. W. Bromily.

2. Both Rudolph and Gerhard Kittel were modernistic in their approach to the Bible, denying that it is the infallible Word of God. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971) Rudolph Kittel (like his son) was an anti-Semite and a believer in Hellenistic mystery religions. Dr. Henry Morris, founder of the Institute for Creation Research, warned that Rudolph Kittel “was a German rationalist higher critic, rejecting Biblical inerrancy and firmly devoted to evolutionism” (Morris, *A Creationist’s Defense of the King James Bible*, El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1996).

3. Gerhard Kittel was also a modernist and a Nazi. He joined the Nazi party in 1933, the same year he began work on his *Theological Dictionary*. Those who worked with him on this project were also Nazis and had been Kittel’s students at the University of Tuebingen. Gerhard Kittel supported Hitler’s hatred of the Jews and was tried and convicted at Nuremburg as a Nazi war criminal. “Throughout the whole of the Nazi era, Kittel’s writings ‘correspond to and support Nazi politics, including all of the policies on the Jewish question, with the possible exception of genocide,’ but one is led to wonder. He never spoke out against extermination. Indeed, he actually propounded what was purported to be a theologically solid Christian justification for the oppression of the Jews, whom he referred to as ‘refuse.’ Kittel discusses what he deems to be the only four options for dealing with the Jews. He rejects extermination but not at all because of



humanitarian motivation but because he thinks it does not work. In fact, he warns against ‘so-called’ Christian sensitivity, saying the faith is not weak sentimentality but a strong, principled anti-Jewish force. His solution is to strip Jews of German citizenship and make them ‘guests.’ He would deprive them of civil rights, debar them from the professions, keep them from marrying Germans, prohibit them from teaching Germans, and impose on them other disadvantages and hardships” (Michael Hakeem, *A Response to “Was Hitler a Christian,”* <http://members.aol.com/IslamTeam/hitler.htm>).

### **ARCHIBALD THOMAS (A.T.) ROBERTSON (1863-1934)**

1. At Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Robertson was the prize student of his Greek teacher, John Albert Broadus (1827-95). In 1888 Broadus appointed Robertson assistant professor in Greek and homiletics. In 1895 Robertson was made Professor of New Testament Interpretation and he held this position until his death in 1934. (Robertson married Broadus’ daughter, Ella.) Robertson authored many books and articles on biblical Greek and had a vast influence as an evangelical popularizer of modern textual criticism. His three most important works were *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (1914), *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1925), and *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931). His vast research into biblical words has helped many Bible students, but his capitulation to modern textual criticism was “death in the pot” (2 Kings 4:40).

2. **JOHN BROADUS**, who influenced Robertson toward the acceptance of modern textual criticism, had himself been influenced by a professor at the University of Virginia as well as by Westcott and Hort and other members of the English Revised Version committee.

- a. Broadus’ professor of Greek at the University of Virginia was **GESSNER HARRISON** (1807-62), the author of *On Greek Prepositions* (1848). He was a Greek classicist and, like Lachmann and other textual critics before him, applied secular principles of textual criticism to the Bible. In 1848, Harrison founded a classical school at Belmont, Virginia, “which had a wide influence throughout the south.” “A chapter of incalculable import in the history of the grammar of the Greek New Testament transpired when Gessner Harrison had in his Greek classes in the University of Virginia the young ministerial student John A. Broadus. Harrison was a highly accomplished Greek scholar, and far advanced beyond his own era in understanding and use of the modern linguistic method, as is evidenced by his great work on *Greek Prepositions and Cases*” (H.E. Dana, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, Introduction, 1927). In November 1850, Broadus married a daughter of Gessner Harrison.
- b. In 1870 John D. Rockefeller helped finance Broadus on a trip to England and Europe. It was deep compromise for a Bible believer to accept largess from a noted unbeliever. Rockefeller also funded the most radically liberal projects, such as

Riverside Church in New York City and the Interchurch Center (which houses the National Council of Churches). The following is from Dr. James Sightler's *Westcott's New Bibles*: "There is a little known story in the *Life and Letters of John Albert Broadus*, founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which can instruct us. This biography was written by Broadus' student, A. T. Robertson, the great Greek scholar, advocate of the critical text, and professor at the seminary. In July 1868, three years after the American Bible Union New Testament had appeared, Broadus wrote an article in the *Baptist Quarterly* strongly defending the last 12 verses of Mark. Burgon quoted from it freely. On September 3, 1868, Westcott wrote a letter to Broadus thanking him for sending a copy of the article, and said: 'I have read with interest the careful and sound criticism which you have kindly called to my attention ... with regard to the passage of St. Mark, which you most ably analyze, external evidence leaves no doubt, in my opinion, that it was a very early addition to the gospel and not, I think, by St. Mark ... my experience, too, in dealing very minutely with the Greek text leads me to think that such a combination as Aleph, B, k, arm is never wrong.' Robertson comments that 'Doctor Broadus afterward felt more uncertain about these last verses of Mark.' Then in 1870 Broadus went to London, and on Oct. 15 he wrote home: 'On Wednesday at two o'clock I went to Westminster Abbey, at the suggestion of Bishop Ellicott. ... I went to the Deanery (A. P. Stanley is Dean), sent in my card with the luncheon, and his Lordship came out saying that he had asked leave of the committee just to bring me in for the half-hour of luncheon. He introduced me in general at the door, and then various gentlemen came up and shook hands ... some of them invited me to visit their cathedrals, others asked about the South. Professor Lightfoot invited me to Cambridge quite cordially. Mr. Westcott is a gentle, lovable-looking man, with a mild, sweet tone, and with a devotional feeling predominating in all his talk. I talked principally with him and Mr. Hort about their forthcoming text of the New Testament, in which I am much interested. Mr. Westcott invited me warmly to Peterborough, where he is Canon.' Unbeknownst to Broadus, the Westcott-Hort text was already in the hands of the revisers. Robertson then commented, 'Bishop Ellicott was all courtesy and kindness to Doctor Broadus and left nothing undone that he could do for his enjoyment.' Political appeal to Broadus through 'the pride of life' eventually had its intended effect. On Oct. 28, 1891, Broadus wrote to G. B. Taylor, 'I beg your pardon for not having acknowledged the receipt of the photolithograph of the Codex Vaticanus, which arrived in due time, and which I am at present having my class examine with great interest and profit.' He had moved a great distance, from defending the last twelve verses of Mark to teaching his impressionable students, 'with profit,' the Vatican Codex, which omitted these last twelve verses of Mark along with many others" (Sightler, *Westcott's New Bibles*).

3. The capitulation to modern textual criticism, which began with Broadus, was carried to fruition by Robertson. In 1925 he published *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. It was dedicated to B.B. Warfield, who, in turn, had been influenced by Charles and

A.A. Hodge at Princeton. The following quotes from the Introduction reveal Robertson's entire capitulation to Westcott and Hort: "It is today the text that is used by scholars all over the world. These two Cambridge scholars have produced a text that is not final, but that is infinitely superior to all others that preceded it since the first printed Greek New Testament in 1514" (*Introduction to the Textual Criticism*, p. 36).

4. In his teaching at Southern Seminary, A.T. Robertson left out many things that he should have taught. I have read his *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* and he did not deal with the following important matters. Many others could be mentioned.

- a. A.T. Robertson did not even mention the essential doctrine of the divine preservation of Scripture.
- b. A.T. Robertson did not introduce his students to the works of the critics of textual criticism, such as Frederick Nolan, John Burgon, Edward Miller, Frederick Scrivener, and Herman Hoskier. He *mentions* Burgon, Miller, and Scrivener in passing, but only to dismiss their work out of hand. He gives his students no serious overview of the vast number of facts and arguments that these and many other men had marshaled against the critical Greek text.
- c. A.T. Robertson did not explain to his students how it would be possible, from a divine perspective, for the apostolic text of the New Testament to become corrupted by the 3rd and 4th century and to be replaced then by a corrupt, man-made, conflated edition that became the standard text of the churches for 1,500 years until the apostolic text was allegedly "recovered" through the principles of scientific textual criticism in the 19th century. Robertson did not explain to his Baptist students how this foundational principle of modern textual criticism could be true from a believing viewpoint and why God would allow the apostolic text to be lost for most of the church age. He never explains, for example, how this theory could be reconciled with Matthew 28:18-20.
- d. A.T. Robertson did not explain to his students that textual criticism, so-called "lower criticism," was coming from the same sphere as "higher criticism" and that most influential names in this field were skeptics. Instead he mentions these men only in a positive light. In "An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament," Robertson mentions the following men in a *positive* manner: Johann Griesbach, Westcott and Hort, Caspar Gregory, Frederick Kenyon, Eberhard Nestle, Ezra Abbot, Hermann von Soden, Alexander Souter, Ernest von Dobschutz, Bernhard Weiss, Francis Burkitt, and Kirsopp Lake. He calls these men "heroes of scholarship" (p. 30). He writes as if they are friends of the truth and does not even hint to his readers that they were skeptics who denied the infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture and other cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. In my estimation, this is a criminal omission.

- e. A.T. Robertson viewed Origen in an almost wholly positive light and did not tell his students that he was a rank heretic who considered Jesus Christ a created being. This omission is the more calamitous because Robertson calls Origen “this greatest ancient biblical scholar” (p. 138) and tells his students that “no scholar has exerted so much influence on the text than he” and admits that Origen had a major role in the Greek text that was preferred by Robertson.
- f. A.T. Robertson did not explain to his students how that heresy raged in Egypt in general and in Alexandria in particular during the early centuries following the apostles and that any ancient manuscript from that part of the world should naturally be suspect. He mentions the work of heretics in that period *but only in passing; he gives this no emphasis whatsoever in regard to his textual theories*. In fact, he downplays the possibility of widespread heretical attack upon the manuscripts, calling it “rare” (p. 160). He takes the strange position, instead, that Received Text readings such as the Ethiopian eunuch’s testimony in Acts 8:37 and “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 Jn. 5:7 were introduced *by orthodox Christians* to defend sound doctrine, thus presenting to his students, as fact and without serious discussion, the amazing phenomena of Bible-believing Christians corrupting their own Scriptures! Robertson does *mention* that Burgon and Miller looked upon the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus as having “skeptical tendencies,” but he dismisses this without documenting the reasons for their position and without giving this important matter any serious consideration.
- g. A.T. Robertson did not explain to his students how the textual principles that he taught (such as conjectural emendation, intrinsic and transcriptional probability) are compatible with God’s foundational principle of faith (Rom. 14:23b; Heb. 11:6).
- h. A.T. Robertson taught his students the principles of textual criticism as facts (such as the Lucian Recension, Conflation, and the existence of a Neutral text and Western text), without proving that such things are indeed facts. These principles have since been disproved even by modern textual critics.
- i. In the 1970s, William Bruner, who studied under Robertson, gave the following testimony to David Otis Fuller. Bruner was a professor of Greek at Bob Jones College from 1949-55 and author of *Children of the Devil* (1966) and *The Truth about Sin* (1977). “On May 12, 1970, you wrote me a very kind letter and sent me some sample materials from your book *Which Bible?* You might as well have been shooting a popgun at a stone wall. My mind was so strongly fortified in the doctrine of Westcott and Hort that I could not for one moment consider the King James Bible. Had I not studied Textual Criticism under the great Dr. A. T. Robertson? I thought that you were just one of those die-hard Fundamentalists who were striving to keep the Christian world under the bondage of traditionalism. Such men are interested only in pleasing the people by catering to their ignorance, prejudice and

sentimentality! But just a few weeks ago I happened to read your two books, *Which Bible?* and *True or False?* For the first time a little new light shone in. I SAW THAT THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THE ARGUMENT. DR. ROBERTSON HAD NOT GIVEN US ALL THE FACTS. As I perused your selections from Burgon and Hoskier, the idols of B and Aleph started to totter, and soon they fell off their pedestals. That was all I needed. I bought a copy of the Textus Receptus and am now using it. Thanks to you ... Sincerely yours, William T. Bruner, Th.M, Ph.D” (D.O. Fuller, *Four Recognized Greek Scholars Had No Use for the Book ‘Which Bible?’ Until They Read It for Themselves*, c. 1973). This practice of not giving students all of the facts pertaining to modern textual criticism and biasing them against even reading the writings of its critics is standard operating procedure for professors who defend the critical text.

4. A.T. Robertson was at the forefront of the ecumenical ventures of his day, helping to organize the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) in 1905. The BWA’s goal was to “allow opportunity for Baptists to grow in fellowship and learn much from each other” (Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 1987, p. 523). What this seemingly commendable goal ignored was that within Baptist circles many were already moving in the modernistic direction.

- a. Almost two decades EARLIER Charles Spurgeon had sounded the following warning about the Baptist Union of Britain, which, with the Southern Baptist Convention, played a central role in the Baptist World Alliance from its inception: “As a matter of fact, believers in Christ’s atonement are now in declared religious union with those who make light of it; believers in Holy Scripture are in confederacy with those who deny plenary inspiration; those who hold evangelical doctrine are in open alliance with those who call the fall a fable, who deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, who call justification by faith immoral, and hold that there is another probation after death, and a future restitution for the lost. Yes, we have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing their union with those who deny the faith, and scarcely concealing their contempt for those who cannot be guilty of such gross disloyalty to Christ” (Spurgeon, “A Fragment upon the Down-Grade Controversy,” *Sword and Trowel*, November 1887). In the same issue of his magazine, Spurgeon announced that he was pulling out of the Baptist Union because of the modernism and compromise, declaring, “We retire at once and distinctly from the Baptist Union.” In March 1888, Spurgeon wrote, “So far as we can judge, there is no likelihood whatever that the Baptist Union will obtain a Scriptural basis.” A.T. Robertson, with his commendable knowledge of Greek, did not have this strength of spiritual discernment and conviction.
- b. The apostasy that was rampant in Britain, including in the Baptist Union, by the time A.T. Robertson helped formed the Baptist World Alliance, was also described by the Bible League. By the time the League was formed in Britain in 1892, the

apostasy which had begun as “a trickle” had “become a stream,” shortly to expanded to a river, and then a veritable ocean of unbelief (“The Bible League: Its Origin and Its Aims,” *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, Abingdon: The Bible League, 1984). Thus, it was in the midst of a river of unbelief, a river that encompassed many Baptists, that Robertson helped launch a unification plan that brought together both evangelicals and modernists.

- c. When J. Frank Norris led the Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan, to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance in 1935 he cited its “modernistic dominated leadership” as a reason (*The F. Frank Norris I Have Known for 34 Years*, p. 311). Prior to that, fundamentalist leader A.C. Dixon had tried to have a resolution passed in the Baptist World Alliance affirming “five fundamental verities of the faith,” including the verbal inspiration of Scripture and the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. An apostate majority of the BWA representatives voted down this most simple of resolutions.
- d. In this case study of A.T. Robertson, we see that Southern Baptists have refused to practice biblical separation for a very long time.

5. The study of unbelieving modern textual criticism had a negative influence on A.T. Robertson. The Bible warns, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). “Lower criticism” (the “scientific” study of how the Bible has journeyed through the centuries; the study of biblical manuscripts) and “higher criticism” (the “scientific” study of how the Bible was written; the study of authorship, etc.) are not the distinctly different disciplines we have been led to believe. They are, in fact, two peas in one pod of end-time skepticism. One denies the Bible’s supernatural inspiration; the other, its supernatural preservation. Those who accept “higher criticism” have always seen “lower criticism” as a friend, and those who accept “lower criticism” are thrown into intimate fellowship with and led toward the acceptance of “higher criticism.” Observe how this worked in the life of A.T. Robertson:

- a. Robertson followed the skeptical fathers of textual criticism, such as Griesbach, Westcott, and Hort, in refusing to give the doctrine of divine preservation any place in his textual theories and in treating the Bible as another book by applying to it secular principles of textual criticism. This is most strange for a man who believed the Bible is a supernatural book, which Robertson most certainly did, but it is the sad fruit of evil communications.
- b. In his article “Language of the New Testament,” which he wrote for the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Robertson speaks of the New Testament in a naturalistic fashion after the pattern of the rationalistic textual critics that he quotes in such profusion. He focuses exclusively upon the “human element” of the New Testament.

- (1) He leaves room for the liberal, unbelieving theory that some unknown elders at Ephesus might have revised the Gospel of John. "A similar explanation is open concerning the grammatical lapses of the Apocalypse, since John is also called *agrammatos*, in Ac. 4:13, whereas the Gospel of John may have had the revision of the elders of Ephesus..."
- (2) Robertson also says we might not know today what the original Gospel of Matthew was like. "It is possible, of course, that the supposed original was in Aramaic, or, if in Greek, of a more Hebraistic type." He does not explain why God would allow the original text, given by divine inspiration, to cease to exist or how this would fit into any type of believing position. These are serious capitulations to modernism and a blow to the biblical doctrines of inspiration and preservation, which Robertson held and defended *in theory* but which he did not apply consistently *in practice*.
- c. Robertson accepted the Form Critical approach to the Gospels, believing that there was a "Q" document written in Aramaic that was used by Matthew and Luke (*An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, pp. 102, 103). The Bible nowhere teaches us to approach the Scripture in this type of humanistic fashion. The Gospels were given by divine inspiration; they are the product of the Holy Spirit. This is what Jesus Christ taught us: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (Jn. 14:26). Though written by men, the Gospels are supernatural productions from beginning to end; a divine four-fold portrait of Jesus Christ. It would have been impossible for the authors of the Gospels to have recalled the details of events with precision, to have known the innermost thoughts of men, to have known the secrets of the eternal Christ (i.e., John 1), or to have known what to write and what to leave out through any natural ability whatsoever. Thus, it is a waste of time to discuss the "human" aspect of the Gospels. Form Criticism is not science and it is not faith, and a Bible believer should never give it a moment's serious consideration, except to refute it. But a man who disobeys the Bible and associates with modernists by reading after them will be influenced by them (1 Cor. 15:33). Not a few fundamentalists, especially would-be scholars, are following in these unwise footsteps even as we write.
- d. Robertson even claimed that the original ending to Mark's Gospel might have been lost or that Mark might have died before he finished it (*An Introduction to Textual Criticism*, p. 216). This is another clear assault upon the doctrines of divine inspiration and preservation.

6. Even during Robertson's own lifetime, theological modernism was beginning to infiltrate Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and soon after his death the takeover was complete.

- a. Historian David Beale says, “Edgar Y. Mullins is the transitional figure who represented a shift among many Baptists from an absolute view of verbal, plenary inspiration to more pragmatic and tolerant views. With him the great house began to shift from its historic rock.” In 1917, Southern Seminary President Mullins published *Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*, which was influenced by psychologist-philosopher William Jones and which “placed great emphasis upon experiential theology” and “was an inductive approach into the Bible on the basis of religious experience, rather than a deductive approach based upon the revealed precepts of God’s Word” (David Beale, *S.B.C.: House on the Sand*, p. 27).
- b. In 1922, Southern Seminary professor John Sampey published *System Bible Study*, which taught theistic evolution. “Dr. Sampey, along with Dr. Mullins, allowed the camel to get his nose into the denominational tent” (Beale, p. 29). A.T. Robertson would teach at Southern Seminary another 12 years after the publication of Sampey’s book.
- c. With the administration of its sixth president, Ellis A. Fuller (1942-50), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary’s drift toward apostasy took a much sharper turn. This era began only eight years after the death of A.T. Robertson.
  - (1) In 1943, a mere nine years after Robertson’s death, noted modernist George Buttrick was invited to bring the E.Y. Mullins Lectures at Southern Seminary. In his book *The Christian Fact and Modern Doubt*, Buttrick wrote: “Literal infallibility of Scripture is a fortress impossible to defend. ... In retrospect it seems incredible that the theory of literal inspiration could have ever been held” (pp. 162, 167). Literal inspiration is not a theory; it is a doctrine taught by the Lord Jesus Christ, who said “the Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn. 10:35). The doctrine of the full, supernatural inspiration of the Bible cannot be held apart from faith, of course, and the same faith that was lacking in Buttrick’s “higher criticism” was lacking in A.T. Robertson’s “lower criticism.”
  - (2) In 1947, modernists John Mackay (president of Princeton Seminary) and Nels Ferre lectured at Southern. Ferre denied practically every doctrine of the Christian faith, including the virgin birth, miracles, vicarious atonement, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his book *The Christian Understanding of God*, Ferre wrote, “We have no way of knowing, even, that Jesus was sinless” (p. 186). On page 191 of that book he blasphemously claimed that Mary was probably impregnated by a Roman soldier. In *The Sun and the Umbrella*, Ferre said, “Jesus never was nor became God” (p. 112) and “The use of the Bible as the final authority for Christian truth is idolatry” (p. 39) and “Hinduism is good and wise” (p 117).
  - (3) Ellis Fuller was a consulting editor of the 12-volume *Interpreter’s Bible*. In this



project he joined hands with noted modernists such as George Buttrick, Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Theological Seminary, and Methodist Bishop Gerald Kennedy. Volume one announced, “The evidence is clear [that the Bible contains] inaccuracies, inconsistencies, interpolations, omissions, overstatements, and so forth” (p. 16). Most of Genesis, we are told by the *Interpreter’s Bible*, and even many things in the Gospels, are largely legendary.

- d. Duke McCall followed Fuller (1956-1981) and took the seminary into even deeper apostasy. “Less than a year before McCall’s retirement from the presidency, a SBTS trustee admitted that this man had led the institution into the mainstream of Liberalism and even into cooperation with the World Council of Churches” (Beale).
- e. Modernists who taught at Southern Seminary in the 1940s and 1950s included Ellis Fuller, Eric Rust, and T.O. Hall. I am convinced that modern textual criticism laid the foundation for this wretched apostasy. Consider some quotes from the writings of these men:

“This does not mean we use phrases like inerrancy, for from the point of view of secular historical recording it is not inerrant. Furthermore, theologically it is not inerrant; otherwise it would not be history. ... It is of value, for example, to know that Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah were two distinct prophets belonging to different times and associated with very different movements of Hebrew history” (Eric Rust, “Theological Emphasis of the Last Three Decades,” *Review and Expositor*, journal of Southern Seminary, Spring 1981).

“The Old Testament begins with two myths of creation both of which reflect elements from the pagan mythology of surrounding peoples” (Rust, *Nature and Man in Biblical Thought*, 1952, p. 20).

“The writers of holy Scripture had vital experiences with God. Having come to know Him by experience, they were led to record these experiences. This is not the Word of God. It is a record of it” (T.O. Hall, 1953, cited from David Beale, *S.B.C. House on the Sand*).

## **UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

The final men we are using to illustrate the rank apostasy that permeates the field of modern textual criticism are the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. Work began on the UBS Greek N.T. in 1955 and the first edition was published in 1966. It was “strongly influenced by the methodology of B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort” (Kent D. Clark, “Textual Certainty in the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament,” *Novum Testamentum* XLIV, 2, 2002). It has gone through several editions, first in 1966, second in 1968, third in 1975, third corrected in 1983, and fourth in 1993. Beginning with the third edition, its text was merged with

that of the Nestle-Aland; thus the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland text and the 3rd UBS are the same. The original editors of the UBS Greek text were **Kurt Aland**, **Bruce Metzger**, **Matthew Black**, and **Allen Wikgren**. **Carlo M. Martini** joined the editorial committee in 1967 (until his retirement in 2002), and the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome became a partner in the project at the same time. **Johannes Karavidopoulos** and **Barbara Aland** are listed on the editorial committee beginning with the fourth edition (they joined the work in or before 1981), and Jan de Waard has replaced Eugene Nida as representative.

Note: In the *Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* we examine the beliefs of other men associated with the UBS Greek New Testament, including Eugene Nida, Arthur Voobus, J. Harold Greenlee, and Jan de Waard.

### **CARLO MARIA MARTINI (1927- )**

1. Martini was an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament from 1967 (beginning with the second edition) until his retirement in 2002.

2. He is a Jesuit priest and the Archbishop Emeritus of Milan. He entered the Jesuit order on February 25, 1944, at age 17, and was ordained on July 13, 1952, at age 25, “an exceptionally young age for a Jesuit.” He graduated *summa cum laude* from the Gregorian and the Pontifical Biblical Institute, the latter with a doctorate in theology. He was consecrated Archbishop of Milan by Pope John Paul II in January 1980 and proclaimed a Cardinal on February 2, 1983. His diocese in Europe is the largest in the world, with two thousand priests and five million “laity.” Martini speaks eleven languages and is “Italy’s best-selling author.” He was President of the Council of European Bishop’s Conferences from 1986 to April 1993. *Time* magazine, December 26, 1994, listed him as a possible candidate in line for the papacy. *The Sunday Telegraph*, London, England, Aug. 11, 1996, described Martini as “the new great hope of the struggling Catholic Church” and “the man many believe will be the next leader of the world’s 800 million Catholics.” That was before Pope John Paul II outlived everyone’s expectations and Martini himself probably became too old to be pope. Martini retired as Archbishop of Milan in the summer of 2002.

3. Martini holds both traditional Catholic dogmas as well as “foreword looking” ones.

- a. Following is a quote, for example, from Martini showing his commitment to the dogma of the traditional Catholic mass: “The ministry of reconciliation goes on throughout our lives, but especially at two moments. The first in intercession, that is in the Eucharist. We take on this ministry when we offer Christ’s body and blood and show it to the people. This is the chief moment in which we are ministers of reconciliation. ‘This is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.’ If only people could understand the extraordinariness of this action and these words” (Martini, *In the Thick of His Ministry*, p. 58.)

- b. Martini also holds “progressive” views in regard to the priesthood and women’s role in the church: “Celibacy is not necessarily linked to the priesthood. ... I am aware of the desire of women to have a greater role in the Catholic Church, and I accept that desire” (*Sunday Telegraph*, Aug. 11, 1996). I believe the views of Martini on these issues represent the future of the Catholic Church, that it will eventually relax its celibacy law and allow women priests; and this move will further its overarching ecumenical designs.

4. Martini was a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, which promotes the theory of evolution and the modernistic documentary views of biblical studies, etc.

5. Martini is a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. At the Academy’s annual meeting in October 1996, Pope John Paul II announced that the theory of evolution is “more than a hypothesis” and that the work done in the last half century by evolutionists “constitutes in itself a significant argument in favor of this theory” (Vatican Information Service, Oct. 23, 1996). The Pontifical Academy of Sciences holds to theistic evolution, claiming that while the world was made by the process of evolution, the soul of man was “directly created by God.”

6. Carlo Martini is also committed to strange universalistic, New Age doctrine. Note the following quotes from his books:

- a. “The risen Jesus is present to each one, as though the individual loved person were the only object of his love. The risen Christ is the love of God revealed in our hearts by the Spirit, in the heart of each and of all and in each of all. Jesus does not individualize this ‘each’; he gives himself to the church, the world, the angels, and the universe. Jesus exists for all. But he is for all in such a way that he is for each one, thus making each one become a part of the whole. Such is the power of the resurrection of the ‘abbreviated’ Word, which has made itself small. Whoever accepts the scandal of the Word-become-small will share in the glory of the universality of the cosmic Word which embraces and synthesizes everything, in which all things find their order and fullness, in which everything is resumed and established” (Carlo Martini, *Through Moses to Jesus*, p. 121).
- b. “Along the way of the scandal of Jesus’ particularization until the funereal opacity of the cross, the glory of God totally fills every being. The more I think about it, the more truly grandiose and almost incredible this truth seems to me -- that God fills every being with himself. He gives himself, not merely a little but in full. This divine fullness transforms into a divinized totality the entire universe of the human will, which the Son has won for the Father. Though it is true that here we do not yet have the ‘all in all,’ that is the final perfection which we are to attain, nevertheless by lovingly contemplating God in all of us, we already obtain a glimpse of how the fullness of God is gradually actuating the ‘all in all,’ according to the measure in

which each one is able to accept such a vision” (Martini, *Through Moses to Jesus*, p. 122).

- c. “The deification which is the aim of all religious life takes place. During a recent trip to India I was struck by the yearning for the divine that pervades the whole of Hindu culture. It gives rise to extraordinary religious forms and extremely meaningful prayers. I wondered: What is authentic in this longing to fuse with the divine dominating the spirituality of hundreds of millions of human beings, so that they bear hardship, privation, exhausting pilgrimages, in search of this ecstasy?” (Martini, *In the Thick of His Ministry*, p. 42).

### **KURT ALAND (1915-1994)**

1. Aland was co-editor of the Nestle-Aland Greek N.T. as well as one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.

2. Aland rejected verbal inspiration, calling it merely an “idea.” “This idea of verbal inspiration (i.e., of the literal and inerrant inspiration of the text), which the orthodoxy of both Protestant traditions maintained so vigorously, was applied to the Textus Receptus with all of its errors, including textual modifications of an obviously secondary character (as we recognize them today)” (Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, 1962, pp. 6, 7). As a contributor (with Allen Wikgren, Bruce Metzger, and Matthew Black) to the 1982 revised edition of Peake’s Commentary, Aland put his stamp of approval upon its modernistic theology, which claimed, for example, that the Old Testament contains myths and the Gospels were the product of uncertain naturalistic processes.

3. Aland even claimed that the canon of Scripture is yet unsettled. “The present state of affairs, of Christianity splintered into different churches and theological schools, is THE wound in the body. The variety in the actual Canon in its different forms is not only the standard symptom, but simultaneously also the real cause of its illness. This illness--which is in blatant conflict with the unity which is fundamental to its nature--cannot be tolerated. ... Along this road [of solving this supposed problem], at any rate, the question of the Canon will make its way to the centre of the theological and ecclesiastical debate. ... Only he who is ready to question himself and to take the other person seriously can find a way out of the *circus vitiosus* in which the question of the Canon is moving today ... The first thing to be done, then, would be to examine critically one’s own selection from the formal Canon and its principles of interpretation, but all the time remaining completely alive to the selection and principles of others. ... This road will be long and laborious and painful. ... if we succeed in arriving at a Canon which is common and actual, this means the achievement of the unity of the faith, the unity of the Church” (Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, 1962, pp. 30-33). Thus we see that Aland does not believe in a settled, authoritative canon of Scripture even today, 2000 years after the apostles! Everything is to be questioned; everything is open to change. He believes it is crucial that a new canon be created through ecumenical dialogue. He proposes tossing 2 Peter and Revelation out

of the Bible for unity's sake (McDonald and Sanders, *The Canon Debate*, 2000, p. 3).

**BARBARA ALAND (1937- )**

1. Barbara, the wife of the late Kurt Aland, is a professor of New Testament and Ecclesiastical History at the University of Munster, Germany, and (since 1983) Director of the Institute for New Testament Textual Research (Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung), Munster. She was co-editor of the Nestle-Aland text with her husband beginning in 1979. She is listed as an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament beginning with the fourth edition and started work with that committee in about 1981. "Barbara Aland also deserves mention for her significant participation in Kurt Aland's contributions" (*The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, pp. 33, 34).

2. That Barbara Aland shares her late husband's modernism is evident from her writings.

a. Consider the pages of *The Text of the New Testament*, which the Barbara co-authored with Kurt. This was first published in German in 1981 and appeared in English in 1987. A second edition was published in 1989. The translator is Erroll F. Rhodes.

- (1) The section on "The Transmission of the Greek New Testament" is written strictly from a naturalistic, unbelieving perspective. There is no hint of a belief in divine inspiration or preservation. According to the authors, the New Testament books were written through a natural process and then rather haphazardly multiplied.
- (2) The authors question the Pauline authorship of Colossians, and they state dogmatically that 1 Peter and 2 Peter "were clearly written by two different authors" (p. 49). 1 Peter 1:1 says, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," and 2 Peter 1:1 says, "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Kurt and Barbara Aland believe one of these statements is a blatant lie.
- (3) They claim that the first New Testament was assembled from "manuscripts representing textual traditions of varying quality" (p. 50). Thus, in their view, there never was a pure apostolic New Testament.
- (4) They claim that the New Testament books were not regarded as canonical or sacred until sometime after the second century (p. 51).
- (5) They claim that the account of Christianity being established in Ethiopia through the conversion of the eunuch converted under Philip's preaching "is purely a

matter of legend” (p. 209), but his glorious conversion is clearly recorded in Scripture and nothing would have been more natural than for him to have preached Christ upon his return to Ethiopia.

(6) They described the Alexandrian School under Clement and Origen as “most impressive” (p. 200), failing to explain to their readers that these men and their “school” were laden with heresies and even denied the eternity and Godhood of Jesus Christ.

- b. Barbara Aland has “explicitly stated that the original text, i.e. the text reflected in the manuscript tradition, is something quite different from the autographs, see her *Die Munsteraner Arbeit*, 68-70” (Jadobus Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, p. 36, f 94).

### **MATTHEW BLACK (1908-1995)**

1. Black is another of the editors of the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament. He was Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism and Principal of St. Mary’s College in St. Andrews University. He was the author of *Scrolls & Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1969) and *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998).

2. Black’s modernistic theology was exposed in his co-editorship with H.H. Rowley of a revised edition of *Peake’s Commentary* in 1982. *Peake’s* was originally published in 1919 and boldly opposed fundamentalist doctrine. Contributors to the revised edition include Bruce Metzger, Allen Wikgren, and Kurt Aland. The editors openly and boldly reject the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and preservation of Holy Scripture.

- a. Note the following excerpt: “It is well known that the primitive Christian Gospel was initially transmitted by word of mouth and that this oral tradition resulted in variant reporting of word and deed. It is equally true that when the Christian record was committed to writing it continued to be the subject of verbal variation, involuntary and intentional, at the hands of scribes and editors” (*Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, p. 633). This is typical modernistic gobbledygook that completely denies divine inspiration and preservation.
- b. Commenting on the Great Commission in Matthew 28, *Peake’s Commentary* casts doubt upon Trinitarian baptism: “This mission is described in the language of the church and most commentators doubt that the Trinitarian formula was original at this point in Matthew’s Gospel, since the NT elsewhere does not know of such a formula and describes baptism as being performed in the name of the Lord Jesus (e.g. Acts 2:38, 8:16, etc.).”

## ALLEN WIKGREN (1906-1998)

1. Wikgren was an ordained minister of the liberal American Baptist Convention. He was the pastor at First Baptist Church in Belleville, Kan., and a professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary and Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kan., before joining the Chicago University Divinity School faculty as the J.M. Powis Smith Instructor in 1940. He was the co-editor of *New Testament Manuscript Studies* (1950) and editor of *Early Christian Origins: Studies in Honor of Harold R. Willoughby* (1961).
2. Wikgren was on the translation committee with Bruce Metzger, Robert Pfeiffer, and Floyd Filson that produced the Revised Standard Version apocrypha in 1957. In our book “The Modern Version Hall of Shame” we document the extreme liberalism of the translators who produced the RSV.
3. At the University of Chicago Wikgren was closely associated with many well-known theological modernists including Donald W. Riddle, Ernest Colwell, Merrill M. Parvis, Edgar Goodspeed, and Harold Willoughby. Note this quote by Riddle in which he boldly denies the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures: “Of course the New Testament writers wrote something. But what is the use of picturing this original copy? It had no status as a sacred document; no reverence for it as Scripture was accorded it until a century after its writing; it was valued only for its practical value; it was early and frequently copied” (Donald W. Riddle, “Textual Criticism as a Historical Discipline,” *Ang. Theological Review* 18, 1936, p. 227; cited from E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281). In fact, the apostles had been told by the Lord Jesus Christ that they would be guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:13); and Peter put the commandments of the apostles on the same level of authority as the Old Testament writings (2 Pet. 3:1) and plainly stated that Paul’s writings were scripture (1 Pet. 3:15-16). Further, the churches received the apostolic teaching as “the word of God” (1 Thess. 2:13).
4. Wikgren contributed to the extremely liberal 1982 revised edition of Peake’s Commentary. The editors were Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley and contributors included Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, and Allen Wikgren. This work openly and boldly rejects the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and preservation of Holy Scripture. Note the following excerpt which treats the Gospels in an entirely naturalistic manner: “It is well known that the primitive Christian Gospel was initially transmitted by word of mouth and that this oral tradition resulted in variant reporting of word and deed. It is equally true that when the Christian record was committed to writing it continued to be the subject of verbal variation, involuntary and intentional, at the hands of scribes and editors” (*Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, p. 633).

## JOHANNES KARAVIDOPOULOS (c. 1944- )

1. Karavidopoulos is a professor on the theology faculty of the University of Thessaloniki in Greece. He has been listed as an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament since the 4th edition (1993). It is interesting that a man representing the very heart of the old Byzantine Empire, which jealously preserved its Traditional Greek Text for so many centuries, is now sitting on the Alexandrian text committee.

2. Karavidopoulos is a member of the Greek Orthodox Church, and in 2003 he supervised the production of the new lectionary of the Orthodox Church for the Greek Bible Society. It is the first time a Greek lectionary has incorporated a modern translation (*UBS World Report*, June-July 2004, p. 23).

3. Karavidopoulos' liberalism is evident from the following information:

- a. Karavidopoulos contributed to the ecumenical book *Orthodox Theology between East and West* (Lembeck, 2001-2004), essays in honor of Professor Theodor Nikolaou, director of the training facility for Orthodox theology at the University of Munich. Contributors include Protestants and Roman Catholics.
- b. According to a report by Dr. Albert Rauch, Ostkirchliches Institute, Regensburg ("Discussion between representatives of the Deutschen Bischofskonferenz and the Russian Orthodox Church, in Minsk, May 13-17, 1998"), Karavidopoulos believes that the church is composed of "the whole creation" (<http://home.t-online.de/home/niko.wy/einheit.htm>).
- c. In "The Interpretation of the New Testament in the Orthodox Church" ([http://www.myriobiblos.gr/bible/studies/karavidopoulos\\_interpretation.asp](http://www.myriobiblos.gr/bible/studies/karavidopoulos_interpretation.asp)), Karavidopoulos makes the following statements:
  - (1) "Orthodox theology makes a distinction between the Truth as that which is God Himself, as it was revealed in Christ and 'dwelt among us' (John 1:14) and the record of the saving truth in the books of the Holy Scriptures. This distinction between record and truth carries, according to T. Stylianopoulos, the following important implications: 'First, it safeguards the mystery of God from being identified with the letter of Scripture. Secondly, it permits the freedom to see in the Bible the experiences of many persons in their relationship with God written in their own language, their own time and circumstances, their own symbols and images, and their own ideas about the world. It permits, in other words, a dynamic relationship between the Word of God contained in Scripture which consists of the truth of the Bible, and the words of men, the human forms in which God's Word is communicated. Thirdly, it presupposes that the Orthodox Church highly esteems also other records of the experience of God, such as the



writings of the Church Fathers, the liturgical forms and texts, and the decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. It rescues the Church from an exclusive focus on the Bible. Finally, THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF A DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LETTER AND SPIRIT DESTROYS DOCTRINAIRE BIBLICAL FUNDAMENTALISM AS A THEOLOGICAL POSTURE (that is to say the idea that God dictated propositions which were then written down word for word by the sacred authors) and thus guards Orthodox Christian life from the error of idolatrous veneration of the text of Scripture (bibliolatry)...’ (T. Stylianopoulos, *Bread for Life: Reading the Bible*, 1980, 13f.).” [COMMENT: We see that Karavidopoulos plainly denies the doctrine that the Scripture is infallibly and verbally inspired, the sole and final authority for faith and practice. He makes the modernistic distinction between the Biblical record and the truth. He makes room for human fallibility in the Scripture. He accepts church tradition as an authority equal to that of Scripture. He boldly rejects biblical fundamentalism. He commits the modernistic error of confusing reverence of the Bible as the infallible Word of God with idolatry.]

- (2) “[Biblical] history -- without ceasing to be the solid ground of the interpreter -- is transmuted and transformed into theology since that which interests us most, finally, is not only the historical event in itself but mainly its value for people of its times and of our times, that is, its existential message.” [COMMENT: This is the heretical Kierkegardian view that one can separate an experiential, existential message of the Bible from the Bible itself, that the Bible’s history does not have to be history in the normal sense of the word, that it is merely a vehicle for theology. Karavidopoulos uses the term “existential” at least twice in this brief article.]
- (3) “None of these points however, can justify a museum-like inflexibility. The Spirit of God which set up and guides the Church is a spirit of freedom and not of slavery. In the name of this spirit of freedom in Christ, we should consider the persistent attempt to preserve the letter, rather than the spirit of patristic interpretation as offering poor service to the people of God. What we need today is not the unthinking survival of the fathers but their creative revival within the framework of modern conditions.” [COMMENT: This is the heretical view that Christian liberty is freedom from the actual words and commands of Scripture. Note that Karavidopoulos, an editor of a Greek New Testament, boldly resists the “persistent attempt to preserve the letter” of Scripture. Thus we see that he fits in perfectly with modern textual criticism’s rejection of the doctrine of the preservation of Scripture.]
- (4) “Of course, the Church without the Bible resembles a ship without a rudder, yet the Bible without or outside the Church remains un-interpreted.” [COMMENT: Here we see the Roman Catholic-Greek Orthodox heresy that the Bible is only properly interpreted by the “Church.”]

- (5) “This, in the area of biblical interpretation means that the Orthodox interpreter on one hand accepts the valuable legacy of his Tradition but, on the other hand, he does not reject the human toil of recent scientific research, but after critical dealing with it, points out its positive achievements.” [COMMENT: Not only does Karavidopoulos exalt church tradition to the same level of authority as the Scripture, but he also exalts science to that level.]
- (6) “This latter feature of the Scripture is very effectively analyzed by Fr. G. Florovsky: ‘Revelation is preserved in the Church. Therefore, the Church is the proper and primary interpreter of revelation. It is protected and reinforced by written words; protected but not exhausted. Human words are no more than signs. ... The Church itself is a part of revelation--the story of ‘the Whole Christ’ (*totus Christus:caput et corpus*, in the phrase of St. Augustine) and of the Holy Ghost. The ultimate end of revelation, its *telos*, has not yet come.’ (G. Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition: An Eastern Orthodox View*, 1972, 25f.)” [COMMENT: Here again is a bold denial of the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Here also is the modernistic “organic development” view of history that was promoted by Karavidopoulos’ predecessor in modern textual criticism, Philip Schaff of the 1901 American Standard Version committee. According to this heresy, “the church” as the body of Christ is ever developing, ever progressing, and ever authoritative. This, of course, is a blatant denial of the finality of Scripture as revelation and the closure of the canon. See Jude 3. Thus Karavidopoulos could sit comfortably on the same committee with Kurt Aland, who believed the canon of Scripture is not yet settled.]

### **BRUCE METZGER (1914- )**

1. Metzger is probably the most influential textual critic alive today. Every book defending the modern versions lists his works. He is popular across all denominational lines, Catholic, liberal Protestant, you name it.

- a. He is popular with evangelicals and, in fact, is considered an evangelical. Metzger was mentioned in *Christianity Today* as one of the “highly skilled, believing scholars” of our day (Michael Maudlin, “Inside CT,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 8, 1999). The book *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: a Selection of Evangelical Voices*, edited by Walter Elwell and J.D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), features a chapter on Bruce Metzger by James A. Brooks (pp. 260-71).
- b. Metzger is even popular with fundamentalists who support modern textual criticism. He is often mentioned and recommended in books written by fundamentalists (e.g., *From Mind of God to Mind of Man* 1999; Central Baptist Seminary’s *The Bible Version Debate* 1997). In a letter to me in the 1980s evangelist Robert L. Sumner said that he trusts Metzger and he rebuked me for labeling Metzger a liberal. On a

visit to the Bob Jones University bookstore in March 2005, I counted five of Metzger's books for sale, and there was no warning of his theological liberalism.

2. Metzger is one of the editors of the United Bible Societies' Greek N.T. He was George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary. He headed up the New Revised Standard Version translation committee, which is owned by the theologically radical National Council of Churches in America. He has served on the board of the American Bible Society.

3. Metzger's 1997 autobiography, the *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian*, omitted any reference to a personal salvation experience.

4. Metzger is a radical ecumenist. He was at the forefront of producing "the Ecumenical Edition" of the RSV in 1973 and personally presented a copy to Pope Paul VI. "In a private audience granted to a small group, comprising the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras, Lady Priscilla and Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and the present writer, Pope Paul accepted the RSV 'Common' Bible as a significant step in furthering ecumenical relations among the churches" (Metzger, "The RSV-Ecumenical Edition," *Theology Today*, October 1977). Metzger has also presented a Bible to Pope John Paul II.

5. Metzger is entirely rationalistic in his approach to the Bible's text. He does not believe in the divine preservation of the Scripture in any practical sense. In fact, he claims that it is possible that we do not have sufficient manuscript evidence to recover the original text, because the manuscripts that exist might not even represent the text of the early churches. "...the disquieting possibility remains that the evidence available to us today may, in certain cases, be totally unrepresentative of the distribution of readings in the early church" (Metzger, *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, 1979, p. 188).

6. Metzger also denies the infallible inspiration of the Bible.

- a. Metzger brazenly claims that some portions of the original Scriptures might have been unfinished or lost before any copies could be made. Of the original ending of Mark 16 he says, "Whether he [Mark] was interrupted while writing and subsequently prevented (perhaps by death) from finishing his literary work, or whether the last leaf of the original copy was accidentally lost before other copies had been made, we do not know" (*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 228).
- b. Metzger advocates that Matthew incorporated errors in his royal genealogy of Christ (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, p. 1; cited from Thomas Strouse, "The Pauline Antidote for Christians Caught in Theological Heresy: An Examination and Application of 2 Timothy 2:24-26," Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary, Newington, CT, 2001).

c. Metzger's theological liberalism in regard to inspiration is evident in the *Reader's Digest Condensed Bible*. He was the chairman of the project and wrote the introductions to each book, in which he questioned the authorship, traditional date, and supernatural inspiration of books penned by Moses, Daniel, Paul, James, and Peter. Consider some examples:

- (1) Genesis: "Nearly all modern scholars agree that, like the other books of the Pentateuch, [Genesis] is a composite of several sources, embodying traditions that go back in some cases to Moses."
- (2) Exodus: "As with Genesis, several strands of literary tradition, some very ancient, some as late as the sixth century B.C., were combined in the makeup of the books."
- (3) Deuteronomy: "Its compilation is generally assigned to the seventh century B.C., though it rests upon much older tradition, some of it from Moses' time."
- (4) Daniel: "Most scholars hold that the book was compiled during the persecutions (168-165 B.C.) of the Jewish people by Antiochus Epiphanes."
- (5) John: "Whether the book was written directly by John, or indirectly (his teachings may have been edited by another), the church has accepted it as an authoritative supplement to the story of Jesus' ministry given by the other evangelists."
- (6) 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus: "Judging by differences in style and vocabulary from Paul's other letters, many modern scholars think that the Pastorals were not written by Paul."
- (7) James: "Tradition ascribes the letter to James, the Lord's brother, writing about A.D. 45, but modern opinion is uncertain, and differs widely on both origin and date."
- (8) 2 Peter: "Because the author refers to the letters of Paul as 'scripture,' a term apparently not applied to them until long after Paul's death, most modern scholars think that this letter was drawn up in Peter's name sometime between A.D. 100 and 150."

d. Metzger's radical modernism in relation to the Scripture is also evident in the notes to the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, which he co-edited with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962 as the *Oxford Annotated Bible* and was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by the Roman Catholic Church. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. Metzger

and May claim the O.T. contains “a matrix of myth, legend, and history,” deny the worldwide flood, call Job an “ancient folktale,” claim there are two authors of Isaiah, call Jonah a “popular legend,” and otherwise attack the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture.

- (1) Introductory Notes to the Pentateuch: “The Old Testament may be described as the literary expression of the religious life of ancient Israel. ... The Israelites were more history-conscious than any other people in the ancient world. Probably as early as the time of David and Solomon, out of a matrix of myth, legend, and history, there had appeared the earliest written form of the story of the saving acts of God from Creation to the conquest of the Promised Land, an account which later in modified form became a part of Scripture” (Bruce Metzger and Herbert May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (2) Note on the Flood: “Archaeological evidence suggests that traditions of a prehistoric flood covering the whole earth are heightened versions of local inundations, e.g. in the Tigris-Euphrates basin” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (3) Note on Job: “The ancient folktale of a patient Job circulated orally among oriental sages in the second millennium B.C. and was probably written down in Hebrew at the time of David and Solomon or a century later (about 1000-800 B.C.)” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (4) Note on Psalm 22:12-13: “the meaning of the third line [they have pierced my hands and feet] is obscure” *COMMENT*: In fact, it is not obscure; it is a prophecy of Christ’s crucifixion!
- (5) Note on Isaiah: “Only chs. 1-39 can be assigned to Isaiah’s time; it is generally accepted that chs. 40-66 come from the time of Cyrus of Persia (539 B.C.) and later, as shown by the differences in historical background, literary style, and theological emphases. ... The contents of this section [chs. 56-66] (sometimes called Third Isaiah) suggest a date between 530 and 510 B.C., perhaps contemporary with Haggai and Zechariah (520-518); chapters 60-62 may be later.” *COMMENT*: The Lord Jesus Christ quoted from both major sections of Isaiah and said they were written by the same prophet (Jn. 12:38-41).
- (6) Note on Jonah: “The book of Jonah is didactic narrative which has taken older material from the realm of popular legend and put it to a new, more consequential use” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).
- (7) Introduction to the New Testament: “Jesus himself left no literary remains; information regarding his words and works comes from his immediate followers

(the apostles) and their disciples. At first this information was circulated orally. As far as we know today, the first attempt to produce a written Gospel was made by John Mark, who according to tradition was a disciple of the Apostle Peter. This Gospel, along with a collection of sayings of Jesus and several other special sources, formed the basis of the Gospels attributed to Matthew and Luke” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*). *COMMENT*: The Gospels, like every part of the New Testament, were written by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:13). This nonsense of trying to find ‘the original source’ for the Gospels is unbelieving heresy.

(8) Notes on 2 Peter: “The tradition that this letter is the work of the apostle Peter was questioned in early times, and internal indications are almost decisive against it. ... Most scholars therefore regard the letter as the work of one who was deeply indebted to Peter and who published it under his master’s name early in the second century” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*). *COMMENT*: Those who believe this nonsense must think the early Christians were liars and fools and that the Holy Spirit was on vacation.

(9) Notes from “How to Read the Bible with Understanding”: “The opening chapters of the Old Testament deal with human origins. They are not to be read as history ... These chapters are followed by the stories of the patriarchs, which preserve ancient traditions now known to reflect the conditions of the times of which they tell, though they cannot be treated as strictly historical. ... it is not for history but for religion that they are preserved ... When we come to the books of Samuel and Kings ... Not all in these books is of the same historical value, and especially in the stories of Elijah and Elisha there are legendary elements. ... We should always remember the variety of literary forms found in the Bible, and should read a passage in the light of its own particular literary character. Legend should be read as legend, and poetry as poetry, and not with a dull prosaic and literalistic mind” (Metzger and May, *New Oxford Annotated Bible*).

- e. Metzger also supports the form criticism approach to the Gospels. In *The New Testament, Its Background, Growth, and Content*, which was published in 1965, he claims that “the discipline of form criticism has enlarged our understanding of the conditions which prevailed during the years when the gospel materials circulated by word of mouth” (p. 86). This is not true. Form criticism is that unbelieving discipline which claims that the Gospels were gradually developed out a matrix of tradition and myth. The fathers of form criticism have held a variety of views (reflecting the unsettled and relativistic nature of the rationalism upon which they stand), but all of them deny that the Gospels are the verbally inspired, divinely given, absolutely infallible Word of God. Metzger says, “What each evangelist has preserved, therefore, is not a photographic reproduction of the words and deeds of

Jesus, but an interpretative portrait delineated in accord with the special needs of the early church” (Ibid.). Metzger is wrong. The Gospel writers have indeed given us, by divine revelation, a careful reproduction of the words and deeds of Jesus Christ in precisely the form designed by the Holy Spirit, a supernatural four-fold portrait of the Saviour. Praise God for it!

## Conclusion

1. Isn't it wrong to paint the entire field of modern textual criticism with the brush of skepticism, seeing that there are also Bible-believing men such as the Brethren Samuel Tregelles, the Presbyterian B.B. Warfield, and the Baptist A.T. Robinson in this arena?

ANSWER:

- a. Heresy and apostasy is the rule and not the exception in the field of modern textual criticism, and we do not hesitate to reject modern textual criticism because of the apostasy of its fathers and chief proponents.
- b. Evangelicals did not invent and have not advanced modern textual criticism; they borrowed it from the skeptics. Robert Dabney warned that evangelicals who accept textual criticism have adopted it “from the mint of infidel rationalism” (Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Discussions Evangelical and Theological*, pp. 361; this first appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871). Theologian Bernard Ramm observed: “Much evangelical scholarship is piggy-backing on non-evangelical scholarship. It does not have an authentic scholarship of its own” (Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology*, New York: Harper & Row, 1983). Ramm was not speaking specifically of textual criticism, but the shoe does fit.
- c. The evangelicals in the field of modern textual criticism have demonstrated a frightful lack of spiritual discernment. The fact that a man is a believer does not mean that he cannot be deceived or that he can safely be followed in all matters.
  - (1) Every evangelical scholar who adopts the canons of modern textual criticism does so even though they are not founded upon biblical precepts and principles and even though they are contrary to any reasonable view of biblical preservation. They were believers in regard to the doctrine of divine inspiration theoretically but rationalists in regard to the doctrine of divine preservation. John Burgon, Edward Hills, and many others have noted the inconsistency of this and have called upon believers to refuse to follow the modern textual critic's principle of treating the Bible like another book. “That which distinguishes Sacred Science from every other Science which can be named is that it is Divine, and has to do with a Book which is inspired; that is, whose true Author is God.

... It is chiefly from inattention to this circumstance that misconception prevails in that department of Sacred Science known as ‘Textual Criticism’” (Burton and Miller, *The Traditional Text*, p. 9). Edward Hills warned: “If you adopt one of these modern versions, you must adopt the naturalistic New Testament textual criticism upon which it rests. This naturalistic textual criticism requires us to study the New Testament text in the same way in which we study the texts of secular books which have not been preserved by God’s special providence” (Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 1967, pp. 226, 27).

- (2) B.B. Warfield, for example, treated the Bible like any other book when it came to textual criticism. Dr. Edward Hills, who began his training in New Testament textual criticism at Westminster Theological Seminary, observed: “Dr. Warfield ignored the providential preservation of the Scriptures and treated the text of the New Testament as he would the text of any book or writing. ‘It matters not whether the writing before us be a letter from a friend, or an inscription from Carchemish, or a copy of a morning newspaper, or Shakespeare, or Homer, or the Bible.’”

2. Does it matter if the influential names in modern textual criticism are skeptics? The authors of the book *From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, who are fundamentalists associated with Bob Jones University, claim that the facts we have garnered in the previous study and in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame* do not matter. “... a textual critic may be an unbeliever when it comes to the Bible’s doctrinal truths. But when it comes to the Bible’s text--to this question of the Bible’s words--a textual critic is initially little more than a reporter” (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, p. 71). In his book *The Truth of the King James Only Controversy*, BJU professor Stewart Custer cites the following men in his “Select Bibliography” -- Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, Eberhard Nestle, Alexander Souter, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort. He does not think it is important that his readers know the theological position of these individuals, that to a man they denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture.

#### ANSWER:

- a. First, the Bible warns that unbelievers do not have spiritual discernment, and it is impossible to know the truth pertaining to the Scripture apart from such discernment (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2).
- b. Further, God demands that His people separate from heretics and apostasy (Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:5; 2 John 10-11). Why would the Lord give such instruction and then use heretics and apostates to give His people the Word of God?

3. But wasn’t Erasmus a “Roman Catholic humanist”?



*ANSWER:*

- a. Erasmus was not a humanist as it is defined today. “The use of the word ‘humanist’ in the Renaissance and Reformation period does not in any way share the atheistic connotations which that word now has in popular usage. A ‘humanist’ in that period was simply someone who was interested in classical literature, culture and education, as a means of attaining a higher standard of civilised life. Stephanus, Calvin and Beza were all humanists in this sense...” (Letter to David Cloud from Andrew Brown of the Trinitarian Bible Society, Jan. 7, 1985).
- b. Though Erasmus was not a strong man spiritually and though he remained a Catholic at least most of his life, he was not a typical Catholic of that day.

(1) Erasmus wanted the Bible to be translated into all languages and available to all classes of people, something that was in sharpest contrast with the position of the Roman Catholic Church of that day. He said: “I would have the weakest woman read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. ... I would have those words translated into all languages, so that not only Scots and Irishmen, but Turks and Saracens might read them.”

(2) Erasmus preached boldly against many of Rome’s errors. Consider some excerpts from his writings:

Matthew 23:27 (on “whited sepulchres”)--“What would Jerome say could he see the Virgin’s milk exhibited for money ... the miraculous oil; the portions of the true cross, enough if they were collected to freight a large ship? Here we have the hood of St. Francis, there Our Lady’s petticoat, or St. Anne’s comb, or St. Thomas of Canterbury’s shoes ... and all through the avarice of priests and the hypocrisy of monks playing on the credulity of the people. Even bishops play their parts in these fantastic shows, and approve and dwell on them in their rescripts.”

Matthew 24:23 (on “Lo, here is Christ or there”)--“I saw with my own eyes Pope Julius II, at Bologna, and afterwards at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession as if he were Pompey or Caesar. St. Peter subdued the world with faith, not with arms or soldiers or military engines.”

1 Timothy 3:2 (on “the husband of one wife”)--“Other qualifications are laid down by St. Paul as required for a bishop’s office, a long list of them. But not one at present is held essential, except this one of abstinence from marriage. Homicide, parricide, incest, piracy, sodomy, sacrilege, these can be got over, but marriage is fatal. There are priests now in vast numbers, enormous herds of them, seculars and regulars, and it is notorious that very few of them are

chaste. The great proportion fall into lust and incest, and open profligacy. It would surely be better if those who cannot contain should be allowed lawful wives of their own, and so escape this foul and miserable pollution.”

- c. Erasmus was much more doctrinally sound than the typical Catholic of his day. Erasmus' *Enchiridion (Christian Soldier's Manual)* was so sound that William Tyndale translated it into English. Following is a quote from Erasmus' *Treatise on the Preparation for Death*: “We are assured of victory over death, victory over the flesh, victory over the world and Satan. Christ promises us remission of sins, fruits in this life a hundredfold, and thereafter life eternal. And for what reason? For the sake of our merit? No indeed, but through the grace of faith which is in Christ Jesus. We are the more secure because he is first our doctor. He first overcame the lapse of Adam, nailed our sins to the cross, sealed our redemption with his blood ... He added the seal of the Spirit lest we should waver in our confidence ... What could we little worms do of ourselves? Christ is our justification. Christ is our victory. Christ is our hope and security. ... I believe there are many not absolved by the priest, not having taken the Eucharist, not having been anointed, not having received Christian burial who rest in peace, while many who have had all the rites of the Church and have been buried next to the altar have gone to hell.”
- d. Erasmus' writings were banned by Rome and burned by the thousands.
  - (1) The Roman Catholic Church said Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched.
  - (2) In France, the Sorbonne burned French translations of Erasmus' work that had been made by Lewis de Berquin. On April 17, 1529, Berquin himself was burned at the stake.
  - (3) In 1535, Emperor Charles V made it a capital offense to use Erasmus' Colloquies in the schools.
  - (4) On July 1, 1523, the inquisitors burned two of Erasmus' acquaintances in Brussels.
  - (5) The Council of Trent (1545-1564) branded Erasmus a heretic and prohibited his works. In 1559, Pope Paul IV placed Erasmus on the first class of forbidden authors, which was composed of authors whose works were completely condemned.
- e. Further, it is important to understand that Erasmus did not create a text through principles of criticism; he merely passed on the commonly received text. Westcott & Hort themselves said that Erasmus merely published the text commonly held as Received “without selection or deliberate criticism”; and they said further that the

choices of the 16th century editors were “arbitrary and uncritical” (Hort, Introduction to the *New Testament in the Original Greek*).

- f. To raise the issue of Erasmus as a means of discounting the facts we have related in this report is to strain at gnats and swallow camels (Mat. 23:24). Those who do so strain at the gnat of Erasmus, who was admittedly weak in the faith but was also an exception in the field of the Received Text, and swallow the camel of the fact that theological modernism, skepticism, and unitarianism is THE RULE among the fathers of modern textual criticism, that apostasy is the intimate companion of modern textual criticism.

4. Each child of God must face this issue for himself and look at the facts for himself (1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 2:27). I did this in the early 1980s, and when I learned the facts related in this report, about the intimate association of modern textual criticism and the modern versions with apostasy, I had no doubt that this was a significant matter. If someone thinks it is insignificant, that is his prerogative, but I can’t take that position and I feel duty bound to warn against it.

5. Thus, one of the many reasons why I stand by the King James Bible and its Greek Received Text is that the alternatives, the critical Greek text and the modern versions, is too intimately associated with end time apostasy.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART III. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS ARE A PRODUCT OF END-TIME APOSTASY**

1. Who was Robert Dabney?
2. According to Dabney, evangelicals have adopted their textual criticism from “the mint of -----.”
3. According to George Samson, the efforts to undermine the integrity of the Received Text began “in -----, among the -----.”
4. The Trinitarian Bible Society warns that God’s people should not permit their judgment to be overawed by great names in the realm of biblical scholarship, because it is evidence that “the distinguished scholars of the present century are merely reproducing the case presented by ----- during the last two hundred years.”
5. Zane Hodges warns that contemporary critical texts are “the fruit of a ----- to New Testament Textual criticism.”
6. Edward Hills warned that in the realm of New Testament Textual criticism “the presuppositions of modern thought are ----- to the historic Christian faith...”
7. Where did biblical criticism have its roots?
8. What man was the forerunner of modern biblical criticism?
9. According to Johann Eichhorn, who wrote the Pentateuch?
10. What kind of explanations did H.E.G. Paulus devise to overthrow the Bible’s miracles?

11. Schleiermacher exalted what over Bible doctrine?
12. Schleiermacher claimed to be a philosopher in his ----- but a devout man with his -----.
13. What part of the Bible did F.C. Baur attack?
14. What German school did Baur found?
15. What is the doctrine of organic development?
16. According to David Strauss, the miracles of the Gospels are ----.
17. According to the Graf-Wellhausen theory, the Old Testament is not divine revelation but is what?
18. According to Wellhausen, Israel did not learn about Jehovah God until when?
19. What were four of the characteristics of the Broad Church movement in the Church of England?
20. James Good warned that “rationalism was a ----- ---- that swept over Germany like a flood.”
21. L.W. Munhall warned of the “alarmingly prevalent -----, -----, and ----- among the masses of the people in Germany, Switzerland, and Holland.”
22. S.M. Houghton warned that in Germany by the mid-19th century, “Philosophy replaced theology, and Scripture was dealt with -----.”
23. In 1887 Charles H. Spurgeon warned of the “----- which has flashed from the pulpit and spread among the people.”
24. What was Kant’s chief authority?
25. According to Hegel, “there is a merging of opposites to form a new idea or thought.” What did he call this action and what did he call the new thought thus formed?
26. Kierkegaard exalted what over truth?
27. What philosopher claimed that God is dead? And what did he mean by this?
28. What is the first doctrine that Unitarianism denies?
28. In what century was the British and Foreign Unitarian Society founded?
29. In what year was the Trinitarian Bible Society formed?
30. Why was the Trinitarian Bible Society formed?
31. What famous English poet was a prominent Unitarian?
32. In what century did Unitarianism arise in America?
33. What famous American college was taken over by Unitarianism in the early 1800s?
34. What two famous American writers were prominent Unitarians?
35. According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, man’s soul is --- and --- is man’s soul.
36. Emerson urged scholars to free themselves from traditions such as the Bible and to trust in what?
37. What was one of the major objectives of the Unitarian Book Society?
38. Name three of the prominent textual critics who were Unitarians.
39. In what year did Marx and Engels publish the *Communist Manifesto*?
40. The basic Marxist idea requires change through ----- and -----.
41. Why does communism thrive on turmoil?
42. According to Marxism, the ----- ----- is the thesis, the ----- ----- the antithesis, and the ultimate synthesis will be a ----- ----- -- --- ----- living in complete equality.

43. 1848 was a time of great turmoil. More than -- violent attempts took place to topple established governments.
44. In what year did the communists gain control of Russia?
45. In what year was Darwin's *Origin of the Species* published?
46. Who coined the term "agnostic"?
47. In what year did Joseph Smith publish The Book of Mormon?
48. What did Joseph Smith teach about God?
49. In what year did the Mormon Church establish its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah?
50. What is the name of the prophetess who founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
51. According to her prophecy, what occurred in October 1844?
52. Who was the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses?
53. What year did he organize the Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society?
54. What do Jehovah's Witnesses believe about Jesus Christ?
55. What Greek New Testament do the Jehovah's Witnesses publish?
56. Who wrote Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures?
57. In what year did this person found the Church of Christ, Scientist?
58. Helena Blavatsky is called the mother of what?
59. What Pope proclaimed the Dogma of Immaculate Conception?
60. In what year did the Vatican I Council begin?
61. What decree was made at the first Vatican Council?
62. What year did the Oxford Movement begin?
63. Why was it called the Oxford Movement?
64. What was its goal?
65. Historian J.A. Froude warned that "The Church of England has not only admitted Catholic doctrine but has rushed into it with -----."
66. What textual critic did Westcott and Hort venerate above that of every other textual critic?
67. What is the name of Johann Griesbach's modernist teacher?
68. Who was the "father of German rationalism"?
69. What was the strange theory that Griesbach adopted from Johann Semler?
70. Bible believers in that day condemned Griesbach for making changes to what three verses?
71. Who was it that loved Griesbach's modern textual criticism?
72. Tischendorf described the goal of his textual criticism as "the ----- to ----- the original form of the New Testament."
73. How is this goal contrary to the doctrine of preservation?
74. What did Westcott and Hort do when an attempt was made to remove Unitarian George Vance Smith from the English revision committee?
75. Why did the Unitarian Smith like the changes made in the modern versions?
76. Zane Hodges of Dallas Theological Seminary said, "The charge of ----- is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort."
77. After studying the writings of Westcott and Hort, Dr. Donald Waite warned that "Westcott and Hort did not so much deny the doctrines of the Word of God -----; they undermined ----- doctrine with ----- and with -----."

78. What did Westcott and Hort believe about the infallibility of the Bible?
79. What did Hort believe about Darwin?
80. What did Westcott believe about the first three chapters of Genesis?
81. Hort said he was a staunch sacerdotalist. What is that?
82. What did Hort believe about the doctrine of substitutionary atonement?
83. Why is the “Universal Fatherhood” of God a false doctrine?
84. What did Westcott and Hort believe about heaven?
85. How two words did John Burgon use to describe Origen’s textual criticism?
86. The Apostles Society at Cambridge was influenced by what Unitarian?
87. Why was F.D. Maurice expelled from King’s College?
88. Dr. Waite described Westcott’s attack on the bodily resurrection of Christ as “... an -----, ----  
----, ----- undermining ... by means of a re-definition of terms.”
89. What two myths did Princeton Seminary hold about modern textual criticism from its inception?
90. Where did Charles Hodge and B.B. Warfield pick up the “modern textual criticism virus”?
91. What approach did Charles Hodge take to the battle against modernism?
92. How did A.A. Hodge change the historic Presbyterian doctrine of inspiration?
93. What sort of treatment did A.A. Hodge give to the doctrine of Bible preservation in his *Outlines of Theology*?
94. Alexander Hodge was “an ----- face to the rationalism underlying textual criticism.”
95. Name two Presbyterian leaders who stood against modern textual criticism during the days of Charles and Alexander Hodge.
96. Why did Philip Schaff’s first public address in America produce a “storm of criticism”?
97. Name two Unitarians that were on the American Standard Version committee.
98. What was the theological position of the authors of the Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon?
99. What did Eberhard Nestle believe about biblical infallibility?
100. Dr. Henry Morris, founder of the Institute for Creation Research, warned that Rudolph Kittel “was a German -----, rejecting Biblical ----- and firmly devoted to -----.”
101. A.T. Robertson was influenced by his professor John Broadus, who in turn was influenced by Gessner Harrison. How did Harrison treat the Bible?
102. What happened to move John Broadus from a position of defending the last 12 verses of Mark to teaching his students the profit of the Vaticanus manuscript?
103. According to William Bruner, who studied under A.T. Robertson, the great Greek profession “had not given us all the -----.”
104. What verse warns that “evil communications corrupt good manners”?
105. Modernist George Buttrick was invited to lecture at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary only how many years after the death of A.T. Robertson?
106. Which one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament is a Roman Catholic Cardinal?
107. How many of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament accept the Bible as the infallibly inspired Word of God?

108. What do Kurt and Barbara Aland believe about the authorship of 1 and 2 Peter?
109. UBS Greek New Testament editor Matthew Black was also an editor of Peake's Commentary. What did this commentary say about the Trinitarian baptism of Matthew 28?
110. According to Johannes Karavidopoulos, "the mystery of God" should not be directly associated with "the ----- of -----."
111. Karavidopoulos says, "the acknowledgement of a dynamic relationship between letter and spirit destroys -----."
112. In the notes to the New Oxford Annotated Bible, co-editor Bruce Metzger said the Pentateuch arose out of "a matrix of ----, -----, and history."
113. Metzger called Job an "ancient -----."
114. Metzger said Jonah was taken from the realm of "popular -----."
115. What are two reasons why it matters if influential names in modern textual criticism are skeptics?

## IV. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS SUPERIOR DOCTRINE

### Section Summary

1. The allegation by modern textual criticism that no doctrine is affected
2. The reply to this allegation
  - a. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal one is commonly accompanied by a distortion of the actual difference between the texts and versions.
  - b. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue is a position that is contradictory and duplicitous.
  - c. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue is a dangerous half-truth.
  - d. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue does not address the real heart of the issue, which is verbal inspiration.
  - e. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that the changes and omissions produce a harsher, coarser text.
  - f. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that men of God and heretics alike recognized the doctrinal issue in the 19th century.
  - g. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that the doctrine of individual passages is changed by the omissions.
  - h. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that key doctrines are WEAKENED by the changes in the modern versions.
  - i. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that some doctrine is actually removed from the critical text and the modern versions.
  - j. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue ignores the fact that the changes in the modern versions create errors in the Bible, and this is certainly a doctrinal issue.

### 3. Conclusion

Further reading on this topic: (1) D.A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*. This book contains a chapter on the superior theology of the King James Bible. Waite organizes the doctrinal errors created by the modern critical text under the headings of theology proper, ecclesiology, angelology, satanology, bibliology, eschatology, soteriology, and christology. (2) Jack Moorman, *Early Manuscripts and The Authorized Version--A Closer Look*. This book looks at 356 passages in which doctrine is affected by the critical Greek text. Both books are available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblfortoday.org>. (3) *Bible Version Omissions of NT Scripture* by Leonard Spencer. P. O. Box 73266, Fairbanks, AK



99707. 907-457-6873. This volume shows the omissions in the critical Greek text in a particularly dramatic fashion by blocking out those portions in this special edition King James Bible. (4) *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament* by Everett Fowler (1906-1990). Fowler made a diligent comparative study of the exact differences between the various editions of the critical Greek text and the Received Text, as well as the differences between the modern English versions and the King James Bible. The fruit of this prodigious labor was his book *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*, the chief feature of which is a series of charts showing the significant theological differences between the texts and versions. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

## **THE ALLEGATION BY MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM THAT NO DOCTRINE IS AFFECTED**

According to defenders of the modern versions, doctrine is unaffected by the differences between the Critical Greek Text and the Received Greek Text underlying the old Protestant versions.

- a. The testimony of two evangelicals (who borrowed it from the modernistic textual critics):

Robert L. Thomas, associated with John Macarthur: “And NO MAJOR DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE IS AFFECTED by a variant reading” (Thomas, “The King James Controversy,” *Masterpiece Magazine*, Jan.-Feb., 1990).

James White: “The KJV’s text is but one example of one ‘stream’ within a larger river. It doesn’t matter what translation you use, THAT TRUTH REMAINS TRUE ALL THE SAME” (White, *The King James Only Controversy*, p. 120).

- b. The testimony of two fundamentalists (who borrowed it from the modernistic textual critics via the evangelicals):

Robert L. Sumner: “... the rare parts about which there is still uncertainty DO NOT AFFECT IN ANY WAY ANY DOCTRINE” (Sumner, *Bible Translations*, 1979).

Ernest Pickering: “Important differences of textual readings are relatively few and ALMOST NONE WOULD AFFECT ANY MAJOR CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE” (Pickering, *Questions and Answers about Bible Translations*, nd).

## **THE REPLY TO THIS ALLEGATION:**

1. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal one *IS COMMONLY*

**ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTORTION OF THE ACTUAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TEXTS AND VERSIONS.**

Note the following statements:

By a Textual Critic: “Only about 400 affect the sense; and of these 400 only about 50 are of real significance for one reason or another, and NOT ONE OF THESE 50 AFFECT AN ARTICLE OF FAITH or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching” (Philip Schaff, *Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version*).

By a Fundamentalist: “[The variants between the modern texts and the Received Text amount to] less than one page of my entire Testament” [and the believer should have] “no concern” (*From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, 1999, pp. 97, 183).

**REPLY:**

- a. Actually the differences affect seven percent of the New Testament. “The fact of the matter is that the Critical Text of Westcott-Hort differs from the TR, mostly by deletions, in 9,970 words out of 140,521, giving a total of 7% difference. In the 480-page edition of the Trinitarian Bible Society *Textus Receptus* this would amount to almost 34 pages, the equivalent of the final two books of the New Testament, Jude and Revelation” (Thomas Strouse, *Review of “From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man,”* November 2000).
- b. Jack Moorman made an extensive study of the differences between the modern critical text and the Received Text and published his conclusions in *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version--A Closer Look*.
  - (1) Moorman found that there are 2,886 words omitted in the Nestle/Aland text. This is equivalent to omitting the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter from the New Testament.
  - (2) Moorman also examines 356 doctrinal passages that are significantly affected by these changes.
- c. There are 230 entire or partial verses (45 entire and 185 partial) omitted or questioned in the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (by the count of Everett Fowler, *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*, available from Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ). These omissions alone account for far more significant

differences than admitted by Schaff. In the New International Version, for example, there are 17 verses omitted outright--Mt. 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mk. 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; Jn. 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Rom. 16:24; and 1 Jn. 5:7. Further, Mark 16:9-20 is separated from the rest of the chapter with a note that says, "The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mk. 16:9-20," and John 7:53--8:11 is separated from the rest of the text with this footnote: "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have Jn. 7:53--8:11." Hence, another 24 verses are effectively removed from the Bible. The NIV questions four other verses with footnotes--Matthew 12:47; 21:44; Luke 22:43; 22:44. Thus 45 entire verses are either omitted or questioned.

Thus, the actual difference between the texts is commonly misstated and seriously downplayed.

## **2. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IS A POSITION THAT IS CONTRADICTORY AND DUPLICITOUS.***

- a. On the one hand the defenders of the modern versions want us to believe that the differences between the texts and versions are largely insignificant and have no bearing on doctrine. On the other hand those who are candid and forthright admit that they believe that the Received Text is corrupt and that the differences between it and the modern critical Greek text are so highly significant that the Received Text and the KJV must be rejected and the sooner the better! Consider some examples of this:

- (1) The Preface to the Revised Standard Version makes this claim about the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text: "The King James Version has GRAVE DEFECTS. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the development of Biblical studies and the discovery of many manuscripts more ancient than those upon which the King James Version was based, made it manifest that THESE DEFECTS ARE SO MANY AND SO SERIOUS as to call for revision of the English translation."
- (2) Frederic Kenyon described the manuscripts representing the Received Text as the "LEAST TRUSTWORTHY that existed" and "FULL OF INACCURACIES" (Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 104).
- (3) Bruce Metzger calls the TR "CORRUPT" (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1968, p. 106). He further calls it "DEBASED" and "DISFIGURED" (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 1975, pp. xxi, xxiii).

(4) Barbara Aland calls the TR “FLAWED, preserving the text of the New Testament in a form FULL OF ERRORS” (Barbara Aland, “A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998,” <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>).

- b. The contradiction and duplicity is obvious. If the differences between the Received Text and the Critical Text are truly insignificant and do not affect doctrine, as the modern version defenders say out of one side of their mouths, then let’s stay with the Received Text because it bears the stamp of divine preservation. It came to us through the fires of persecution; it represents the traditional text that was used by the churches through the centuries; it can be traced to Antioch rather than to Egypt; and it is not the product of modernistic and Unitarian scholarship.

### **3. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IS A DANGEROUS HALF-TRUTH.***

- a. To say that there is general doctrinal agreement between the texts and versions *is indeed PART of the truth.* We can rejoice in the fact that there is basic doctrinal agreement between the different Greek texts and versions. This shows that God has overruled the wicked plan of devils and men and has maintained essential doctrine even in texts that are not perfectly pure. Taken overall, there is enough sound doctrine in most texts or versions to win souls and build churches.

(1) Many of the textual differences are indeed quite insignificant and in these cases one would not lose much if he accepted any of the various positions. I personally believe that we need to follow the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts in all cases, but in instances such as the following, the choice does not have great theological significance.

- (a) For example, 3 John 14 in the Received Text says, “Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.” The critical text puts this in verse 15.

- (b) Another example is Paul’s doxology to the book of Romans. In the Received Text and the Latin Vulgate and in some Greek manuscripts, Paul’s doxology is found in Romans 16:25-27, whereas in the majority of Greek manuscripts it is found at the end of chapter 14.

(2) Taken overall, there is enough sound doctrine in most texts or versions to win souls and build churches.

- (a) Consider, for example, the Latin Vulgate that was adopted by the Roman

Catholic Church and translated into many languages (including English in 1380 by John Wycliffe and his associates). This text represented somewhat of a middle ground between the Traditional Text preserved in the Greek Orthodox churches and the Alexandrian Text represented by the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, though it is much closer to the Received Text than to the Alexandrian. It preserved disputed passages such as Mark 16:9-20; John 9:1-7; Acts 8:37; and 1 John 5:7; but it contained some corruptions such as the omission of “God” in 1 Tim. 3:16. The Latin Vulgate preserved general doctrine and it could be used to preach the gospel and build churches, and it was so used by many Waldenses, pre-reformation Anabaptists, Lollards, and others. But because it contained some textual corruption and error, it was not the sharpest Sword that it could have been. And when the Bible was brought out of the Dark Ages by the Spirit of God, it was the pure Received Text containing all of the apostolic readings that received His divine stamp of approval and that went to the ends of the earth during the great spiritual revivals and missionary movements of the 16th to the 19th centuries.

- (b) This is true in regard to the modern translations of the Bible in various languages that are based on the critical Greek text. These versions contain enough sound doctrine to win souls and establish churches, but they are not as strong and powerful as they should be and these same Bibles can become a hindrance to the purity and spiritual power of the churches. When we arrived in Nepal in 1979 to start a Baptist church we were confronted with the problem that the standard Nepali Bible was translated from the English Revised Version and therefore contained the textual corruptions we have discussed in this course. We had no alternative at first, so that is the Bible we used, and by God’s grace souls were saved and a church was established. At the same time, we were never satisfied with this Bible; we were always frustrated at its weakness; and we prayed continually that the Lord would raise up laborers who could produce a better translation based on the preserved Hebrew and Greek texts. Our prayers were answered and in the early 1990s a Nepali New Testament based on the King James Bible and its underlying Greek text was published for the first time and the Nepali believers have a much sharper sword.
- (c) The same is true with modern versions in English. I can show someone the Gospel of the grace of Christ with most Bible translations, even a Roman Catholic one. I can teach the doctrine of the Atonement and defend the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit from the New American Standard Bible or the New International Version (though not as effectively as from the KJV). This shows the marvelous hand of God to confound the efforts of the devil, but this does not mean that the changes made in these and other new translations are not of great theological significance and it does not mean that we should accept all texts and versions just because there is vague doctrinal agreement in the whole.

- b. Thus, to say that there is general doctrinal agreement between the texts and versions is part of the truth, but it is not the whole truth because it does not follow that the differences are insignificant and harmless. We will demonstrate this conclusively as this study progresses. A half-truth, my friends, can be a whole lie! We must hasten to add that many defenders of the modern versions, probably most, simply do not know the whole truth, having been taught or having read only a lopsided view of the textual issue. And, in many cases, they are afraid to look closely at the position of John Burgon or Edward Miller or Edward Hills or David Otis Fuller or Donald Waite or Thomas Strouse because they hesitate to be identified with a position that is widely ridiculed and that can result in social and spiritual ostracism.

**4. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *DOES NOT ADDRESS THE REAL HEART OF THE ISSUE, WHICH IS VERBAL INSPIRATION.*** General doctrine is not sufficient when one is discussing the Bible.

- a. We believe in verbal inspiration rather than thought inspiration (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4; Lk. 4:4; 1 Cor. 2:13). The Bible is the Word of God because the Bible is written in the WORDS of God. In this light, the idea that thousands of omissions and changes are of little significance because they (allegedly) do not affect the basic doctrines of the Bible is invalid. It's not just basic doctrine that we need.

Exodus 24:4--“And Moses wrote **ALL THE WORDS** of the Lord...”

Deuteronomy 6:6--“And **THESE WORDS**, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart.”

Deuteronomy 12:28--“Observe and hear **ALL THESE WORDS** which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever...”

Deuteronomy 17:18,19--“...he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep **ALL THE WORDS** of this law and these statutes, to do them.”

Deuteronomy 18:18--“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my **WORDS** in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them **ALL** that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my WORDS which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

Deuteronomy 27:2,3--“And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones,

and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them **ALL THE WORDS** of this law...”

Deuteronomy 32:1--“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, **THE WORDS** of my mouth.”

Deuteronomy 32:45,46--“And Moses made an end of speaking **ALL THESE WORDS** to all Israel: And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto **ALL THE WORDS** which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, **ALL THE WORDS** of this law.”

Joshua 8:34,35--“And afterward he read **ALL THE WORDS** of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. there was not **A WORD** of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation.”

Joshua 24:26--“And Joshua wrote these **WORDS** in the book of the law of God...”

I Samuel 8:10--“And Samuel told **ALL THE WORDS** of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.”

Psalms 12:6--“The **WORDS** of the Lord are pure **WORDS**: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

Proverbs 30:6,7--“**EVERY WORD** of God is pure ... Add thou not unto his **WORDS**, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

Jeremiah 1:9--“Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my **WORDS** in thy mouth.”

Jeremiah 7:27--“Therefore thou shalt speak **ALL THESE WORDS** unto them...”

Jeremiah 23:9--“Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of **THE WORDS** of his holiness.”

Jeremiah 23:36--“...ye have perverted **THE WORDS** of the living God, of the Lord of hosts our God.”

Jeremiah 30:2--“Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee **ALL THE WORDS** that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”

Ezekiel 3:10--“Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **ALL MY WORDS** that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.”

Luke 4:4--“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by **EVERY WORD OF GOD.**” (See also Matthew 4:4.)

John 8:47--“He that is of God heareth God’s **WORDS**: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

1 Corinthians 2:13--“Which things also we speak, not in **THE WORDS** which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth...”

1 Timothy 4:6--“...nourished up in **THE WORDS** of faith and of good doctrine...”

2 Peter 3:2--“That ye may be mindful of **THE WORDS** which were spoken before by the holy prophets and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour.”

Jude 17--“But, beloved, remember ye **THE WORDS** which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 1:3--“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear **THE WORDS** of this prophecy...”

Revelation 22:18, 19--“For I testify unto every man that heareth **THE WORDS** of the prophecy of this book ... And if any man shall take away from **THE WORDS** of the book of this prophecy...”

- b. The omission even of single words is frequently a significant doctrinal issue. Consider one example:

COLOSSIANS 2:18

KJV: “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath NOT seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

ASV: “Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

NIV: “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”



There is only one word omitted in the critical Greek text in this verse and that is the word “not”; and this omission is reflected in the modern English translations. To remove this one word changes the teaching and interpretation of the verse dramatically. According to the Traditional Text, these Gnostic heretics were intruding into things they had not seen. The meaning of this is not difficult to perceive. They were dealing with spiritual matters that they did not understand and were boldly describing the unseen spirit world even though they could not see it and actually knew nothing about it. On the other hand, the ASV says that the Gnostic heretic was “dwelling in the things which he hath seen.” What does that mean? It is impossible to know, and the change further seems to confirm that these heretics had actually seen something. Yet only one word is changed. In fact, Bible doctrine often hinges on only one word.

- c. To go further, the omission even of single letters can create significant doctrinal issues. Consider the following well-known verse that has given such great comfort to so many:

LUKE 2:14

KJV “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

ASV “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”

NIV: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

The KJV, following the Greek Received Text, extends God’s peace and good will toward mankind in general because of the coming of the Christ into the world to die for man’s sins. This is the “Good News” of Jesus Christ, that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that WHOSOEVER believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” On the other hand, the modern versions, following the critical Greek text, extend God’s peace only to a select group of men, those in whom he is well pleased or those on whom his favor rests. In one case (the ASV), we have the basis for works salvation, and in the other (the NIV) we have the basis for Calvinistic sovereign election. That there is a significant doctrinal issue here cannot be questioned, and ***the difference lies in only one letter in the Greek, the sigma or letter s (eudoxia vs. eudoxias).***

- d. In light of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, we need to ask some questions as it relates to the Bible text and version issue today.
  - (1) How can we logically stand for a doctrine of verbal inspiration if we believe that the verbally inspired “original” text is somehow represented today only by a mass of contradictory texts and versions?

- (2) Of what benefit is the doctrine of verbal inspiration if it applies only to the autographs and if we do not hold to a doctrine of preservation that results in one authoritative Bible today? Were there many editions and varieties of the inspired autographs? This is what the modernistic textual critics hold, but how can a believer accept such a thing?
- (3) How is the doctrine of verbal inspiration upheld when one believes that God has allowed the textual situation to deteriorate to the place where we cannot know exactly what the verbally inspired text is in hundreds of places? The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament evaluates its own readings by the letters A, B, C, and D, representing various degrees of uncertainty. "A" represents "that the text is (allegedly) certain," B "that it is almost certain," C "that the Committee had difficulty in deciding," and D "that the Committee had great difficulty in arriving at a decision." Even assuming that the "A" readings are truly "certain" (and the editors themselves in other places admit they are not; for example, Kurt and Barbara Aland, referring to the UBS Greek New Testament, admit that "the new text itself is not a static entity ... every change in it is open to challenge" --*The Text of the New Testament*, p. 35), there are literally hundreds of B and C readings in the UBS text. In fact, in the first edition of the UBS Greek NT only 9% of the ratings (136) were "A," whereas 34% (486) were B, 49% (702) were C, and 8% (122) were D (Kent D. Clark, "Textual Certainty in the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament," *Novum Testamentum* XLIV, 2, 2002). In the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek NT, 9% (126) were A, 33% (475) were B, 48% (700) were C, and 10% (144) were D. Mysteriously, between the 3rd and the 4th editions, the committee became much more confident in its work, so that in the 4th edition, 36% (514) are A, 38% (541) are B, 26% (367) are C, and only 1% (9) are D. When the ratings are converted to numbers (A=4, B=3, C=3, and D=1), the mean ranking increases from 2.4 in the 3rd edition to 3.0 in the 4th edition. In two instances, a D rating was raised three levels to become an A (Lk. 19:25 and Acts 2:44); and 84 times a D rating became a B or a C rating became an A. Further, 300 rated readings were dropped from the apparatus, and 59% (178) of these were C and D readings. Kent D. Clark observes, "IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE ALTERED THE LETTERRATED VARIANTS IN ORDER THAT THE PERCEIVED QUALITY OF TEXT PRESENT IN THIS LATEST EDITION MIGHT REFLECT AN OVERALL UPGRADE AND NEW OPTIMISM. ... Those variants that denote a higher degree of certainty (i.e. A and B ratings) have more representation in the UBSGNT4 text, while those that denote a lower degree of certainty (i.e. C and D ratings) have less representation. Similarly, those variants that denote a higher degree of certainty are preserved in the UBSGNT4 text, while those that denote a lower degree of certainty are more readily omitted" (Clark, *Ibid.*). Bruce Metzger further admits that the UBS

editors “have attached a high degree of probability to readings which others consider much more doubtful or would even reject altogether” (Metzger quoted by J.M. Ross, “The United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Languages*, 95, 1976, pp. 117-18). Also, the letter rating often contradicts what is stated in the editors’ notes. For example, a variant cited in Mk. 1:41 has a B rating, which supposedly indicates that “the text is almost certain,” but the note says, “It is difficult to come to a firm decision concerning the original text.” Clark lists several examples of this type of discrepancy between the letter ratings and the commentary. The issue of the UBSGNT ratings is very suspicious; but even with the increased certainty of the UBSGNT committee the majority of ratings are still B, C, and D. How does all of this uncertainty and confusion support the doctrine of the inerrancy of the biblical text?

- e. When we talk about verbal inspiration and the necessity of having all of God’s words, the question arises in regard to how this is affected by the translation of the Bible into other languages. In 1985 Thomas Hale, a missionary medical doctor in Nepal, wrote to me and said: “I cannot concern myself with figures [such as 5,000 word differences between the Textus Receptus and Westcott-Hort text]. If I concerned myself with those, I would have to insist that we should never have translated the Bible out of the original Greek and Hebrew.” Following are some thoughts about this statement:
  - (1) When we “count” words, it is the Hebrew and Greek that we are talking about, not a translation into other languages. The translation of the Bible into secondary languages such as English or Nepali does not overthrow the importance of having all of the words of God in the underlying Hebrew and Greek foundation. When we talk about the importance of having all of the words of God, we are first of all talking about the words that God gave in the “original” Hebrew and Greek text and preserved for us in the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received texts.
  - (2) We understand that the translation of the Scriptures requires certain changes in words and sentence structure because of the nature of human language. For example, Hebrews 1:3 contains 28 words in the Greek Received Text. When translated, this verse has 42 words in English (KJV), 43 words in German (Luther 1912), and 29 words in Nepali (Trinitarian Bible Society edition).
  - (3) What we want in a good version is not a verbal translation in the sense of a mechanical word-for-word interlinear but *verbal accuracy* in the sense of the translator taking every word of the original into account. We know that the translation will not have exactly the same number and order of words as the original.

- (4) But if we are not careful about every word of the underlying Hebrew and Greek texts, the foundation of Scripture will be weakened and the resulting translations will be corrupted. For example, if the words “dia heautou” (“by himself”) are missing in the Greek in Hebrews 1:3, as they are in the critical Greek text, no subsequent translation can be pure regardless of how precisely it is translated. This is why even literal modern versions such as the New American Standard are corrupt in this verse. We must have word for word purity in the Hebrew and Greek texts. This is the foundational battleground.
- f. In light of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, the attitude of the modern version defenders toward God’s words is atrocious. When they hear that the Nestle/Aland critical Greek text differs from the Greek Received Text in 5,604 places and that 2,886 words are omitted, they almost yawn! The words of the Bible appear to mean very little to them. They run immediately to the mythical allegation that doctrine is not affected and/or they warn about “bibliolatry.”
- (1) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the heart of the Psalmist: Psalm 12:6
  - (2) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the writer of Proverbs: Prov. 30:5-6
  - (3) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ: Matthew 4:4; 5:18
  - (4) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the teaching of the Apostles: Revelation 22:18-19
  - (5) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with the attitude of the Jews of old: “The Jews cherished the highest awe and veneration for their sacred writings which they regarded as the ‘Oracles of God.’ They maintained that God has more care of the letters and syllables of the Law than of the stars of heaven, and that upon each tittle of it, mountains of doctrine hung. For this reason every individual letter was numbered by them and account kept of how often it occurred. In the transcription of an authorized synagogue manuscript, rules were enforced of the minutest character” (Herbert Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*).
  - (6) Contrast this modern textual criticism attitude with that of the Protestant denominations of old:
    - (a) “All our hopes for eternity, the very foundation of our faith, our nearest and

dearest consolation, are taken away from us if one line of that sacred book, that Bible, be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy” (Convocation of bishops, Church of England, 1863).

- (b) “Oh, but it is only one word [they say]. Yes, but one word of Scripture of which it is said ‘Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name!’ ‘Only one word!’ But that word is ‘God.’ Better the whole living church of God should perish than that that one word should perish. ‘If any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy God shall take away his part.’ Let criticism pause. The principle at stake is solemn” (George Sayles Bishop, 1885, referring to the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16; Bishop was pastor of the Reformed Church of Orange, New Jersey).

g. The careless attitude toward the Words of God leads farther and farther from the truth.

- (1) D.A. Carson is an example of this. He has written a book defending the modern critical text and the modern versions against the Received Text and the King James Bible (Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism*, 1979). This book has influenced many fundamentalists. It is sold in the bookstores of many fundamentalist Bible colleges and seminaries.
- (2) Yet Carson has come to the position that form criticism of the Gospels is an authentic endeavor and that in the Gospels we do not have the actual words of Jesus but only a semblance of what Jesus said. “But their failure to preserve the *ipsisima verba Jesu* (the authentic WORDS of Jesus) does not mean that they have tampered with the *ipsisima vox Jesu* (the authentic VOICE of Jesus)” (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, p. 44).
- (3) I do not believe this for a moment. Though I cannot answer every problem that arises when attempting to compare passages in the four Gospels, the solution for a Bible believer is not to give up the doctrine of verbal inspiration or to think that the Gospels do not give us the “authentic words of Jesus.” The solution is to base one’s position of the Gospels solidly upon the doctrine of verbal inspiration and if one cannot answer every problem associated with that position, so be it! (By the way, I have answered many of these problems in the book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*.)
- (4) The reason that modern textual criticism leads to skepticism is because it is not grounded on the principle of faith. This was understood by Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard. “... the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to complete modernism, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if

it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn't it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn't it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn't it right to ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... Impelled by this remorseless logic, many an erstwhile conservative Bible student has become entirely modernistic in his thinking. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. HE HAS MERELY TRAVELED FARTHER DOWN THE SAME PATH WHICH HE BEGAN TO TREAD WHEN FIRST HE STUDIED NATURALISTIC TEXTUAL CRITICISM of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study" (Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 83).

**5. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE CHANGES AND OMISSIONS IN THE CRITICAL GREEK NEW TESTAMENT PRODUCE A HARsher, COARser TEXT*. This is a doctrinal issue, because it strikes at the heart of the doctrine of inspiration.**

- a. The harsher nature of the Alexandrian Text is acknowledged by Westcott and Hort and other textual critics, such as Bruce Metzger. They characterize the Received Text as full, lucid, complete, smooth, attractive; whereas they admit that their preferred Alexandrian Text is less elegant, less harmonious, verbally dissident (characterized by difficulties and contradictions), and that it contains large numbers of omissions of pronouns, conjunctions, expletives, and "supplied links of all kinds." Consider this statement by Bruce Metzger: "Since scribes would frequently bring divergent passages into harmony with one another, in parallel passages. ... that reading which involves VERBAL DISSIDENCE is usually to be preferred to one which is verbally concordant. Scribes would sometimes: a) replace an unfamiliar word with a more familiar synonym. b) alter a less refined grammatical form or less elegant expression in accord with contemporary atticizing preferences; or c) add pronouns, conjunctions, and expletives TO MAKE A SMOOTHER TEXT" (Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*).

- (1) For example, when Alexandrian manuscripts say in Matt. 1:7, 10, that Amos and Asaph were kings of Israel, as the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus do, modern textual critics assume this was the original reading, even though it is an obvious mistake, and that later this "verbal dissidence" was "harmonized" and corrected by the alleged "editors" of the Traditional Text.

- (2) And when “yet” is omitted in John 7:8 in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, thus creating an error in the text and causing the Lord Jesus to tell a lie, many modern textual critics assume this was the original reading which was later “smoothed out” and corrected by “editors” of the Traditional Text.
- b. John Burgon described the Alexandrian Text in these words: “More serious in its consequence, however, than any other source of mischief which can be named, is the process of Mutilation, to which, from the beginning, the Text of Scripture has been subjected. By the ‘Mutilation’ of Scripture we do but mean the intentional Omission (from whatever cause proceeding) of genuine portions. And the causes of it have been numerous as well as diverse. Often indeed, there seems to have been at work nothing else but *a strange passion for getting rid of whatever portions of the inspired Text have seemed to anybody superfluous*,--or at all events, to have appeared capable of being removed without manifest injury to the sense. But the estimate of the tasteless second-century Critic will never be that of the well-informed Reader, furnished with the ordinary instincts of piety and reverence. This barbarous mutilation of the Gospel, by *the unceremonious excision of a multitude of little words*, is often attended by no worse consequence than that thereby *an extraordinary baldness is imparted to the Evangelical narrative*. The removal of so many of the coupling-hooks is apt to cause the curtains of the Tabernacle to hang wondrous ungracefully; but often that is all” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).
- c. We are convinced that the eternal word of God is *not* characterized by “verbal dissidence” or a lack of elegance and harmony.

**6. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue IGNORES THE FACT THAT MEN OF GOD AND HERETICS ALIKE RECOGNIZED THE DOCTRINAL ISSUE IN THE 19TH CENTURY.**

- a. Men of God clearly recognized the doctrinal issue associated with modern textual criticism. We have documented this extensively in the book *For Love of the Bible*. Some of the men we have quoted in that book who saw the textual and versional issue as doctrinal are Henry Todd, John Jebb, Frederick Nolan, Alexander McCaul, Solomon Malan, John Cumming, Anthony Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury), Joseph Philpot, Robert Dabney, George Marsh, Robert Breckinridge, John Burgon, and Edward Miller. Consider a few examples:
- (1) Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) published *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament* in 1815 and defended the Greek Received Text against the critical text. Nolan traced the history of the doctrinal corruptions that were introduced into the text of various manuscripts during the first four centuries after Christ. “The works of those early writers lie under the positive imputation of being corrupted. The copies of Clement and Origen were corrupted in

their life time; the manuscripts from which Tertullian's works have been printed are notoriously faulty; and the copies of Cyprian demonstrate their own corruption, by their disagreement among themselves, and their agreement with different texts and revisals of Scripture. It is likewise indisputable, that these fathers not only followed each other, adopting the arguments and quotations of one another; but that they quoted from the heterodox as well as the orthodox. They were thus likely to transmit from one to another erroneous quotations, originally adopted from sources not more pure than heretical revisals of Scripture. ... New revisals of Scripture were thus formed, which were interpolated with the peculiar readings of scholiasts and fathers. Nor did this systematic corruption terminate here; but when new texts were thus formed, they became the standard by which the later copies of the early writers were in succession corrected" (*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. 326-332). Nolan associates this textual corruption with the manuscripts that are preferred by modern textual critics, such as the Vaticanus. Nolan looked upon the textual issue as a doctrinal issue and was convinced that the omissions and changes introduced by modern textual criticism was an attack upon sound doctrine that could be traced to the early centuries following the apostles.

- (2) Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-69), editor of *The Gospel Standard*, gave six reasons against the revision of the King James Bible. Under reason number four he warned about the doctrinal nature of the textual innovations proposed by modern textual critics. "The Socinianising Neologian would blot out 'GOD' in 1 Tim. 3.16, and strike out 1 John 5.7, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit his Tractarian views. ... Once set up a notice, 'The Old Bible to be mended,' and there would be plenty of workmen, who trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces" (Philpot, "The Authorized Version of 1611," *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857). Philpot further warned of giving up the Bible "to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness." [NOTE: Puseyites was another term for the Oxford Movement, the back-to-Rome movement within the Anglican Church. It was so named for Edward Pusey, an influential personality within the movement. German Neologians refers to German modernists who were pursuing every new modernistic theory; neology is a love of novelty.]
- (3) American Presbyterian scholar Robert Dabney (1820-98) also looked upon the textual debate as a doctrinal issue. He believed the Alexandrian manuscripts such as the Vaticanus represent the corruption introduced by Sabellians and Arians in the early centuries. He believed that Origen had a key role in transmitting this corruption. In 1871 Dabney published a warning against modern textual criticism, observing that many of the passages that are modified by textual criticism have key doctrinal significance: "The following list is not presented as complete, but as containing the most notable of these points. ... the Sinai and the Vatican MSS.



concur in omitting, in Matthew vi. 13, the closing doxology of our Lord's prayer. In John viii. 1-11, they and the Alexandrine omit the whole narrative of Christ's interview with the woman taken in adultery and her accusers. The first two omit the whole of Mark xvi., from the ninth verse to the end. Acts viii. 37, in which Philip is represented as propounding to the eunuch faith as the qualification for baptism, is omitted by all three. ... in Acts ix. 5, 6 ... the Sinai, Vatican and Alexandrine MSS. all concur in omitting 'Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said...' from the passage. In 1 Tim. iii. 16 ... the Sinai, Codex Ephremi, and probably the Alexandrine [omit God] ... In 1 John v. 7 ... all the old MSS. concur in omitting the heavenly witnesses... In Jude 4 ... the MSS. omit God. In Rev. i. 11 ... all three MSS. under remark concur in omitting the Messiah's eternal titles. ... IF NOW THE READER WILL GLANCE BACK UPON THIS LATTER LIST OF VARIATIONS, HE WILL FIND THAT IN EVERY CASE, THE DOCTRINAL EFFECT OF THE DEPARTURE FROM THE RECEIVED TEXT IS TO OBSCURE OR SUPPRESS SOME TESTIMONY FOR THE DIVINITY OF THE SAVIOUR. ... THESE VARIATIONS ARE TOO NUMEROUS, AND TOO SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR EFFECT UPON THE ONE DOCTRINE, TO BE ASCRIBED TO CHANCE. ... SOMEBODY HAS PLAYED THE KNAVE WITH THE TEXT" (Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871).

- (4) John Burgon (1813-88) and his co-author Edward Miller (1825-1901) also saw the textual issue as a doctrinal issue. "Numerous as were the heresies of the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, they almost all agreed in this;--that they involved a denial of the eternal Godhead of the SON of Man: denied that He is essentially very and eternal God. ... IT IS A MEMORABLE CIRCUMSTANCE THAT IT IS PRECISELY THOSE VERY TEXTS WHICH RELATE EITHER TO THE ETERNAL GENERATION OF THE SON,--TO HIS INCARNATION,--OR TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS NATIVITY,--WHICH HAVE SUFFERED MOST SEVERELY, and retain to this hour traces of having been in various ways tampered with" (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, 1896, p. 209).

It is amazing that these matters, which were understood by the Reformation editors and confirmed by believing scholars in the nineteenth century, are scoffed at today, even by many evangelicals and fundamentalists. Why? It is because these evangelicals and fundamentalists are not depending on their own scholarship but upon rationalistic scholarship. Theologian Bernard Ramm admits this fact: "Much evangelical scholarship is piggy-backing on non-evangelical scholarship. It does not have an authentic scholarship of its own" (Ramm, *After Fundamentalism: The Future of Evangelical Theology*, New York: Harper & Row, 1983). Ramm was not speaking specifically of textual criticism, but the shoe does fit. Robert Dabney observed that evangelicals have adopted textual criticism "FROM THE MINT OF INFIDEL RATIONALISM."

b. Heretics also recognized the doctrinal issue associated with the modern texts and versions. James White and others today are claiming that there is no weakening of the doctrine of Christ's deity or other doctrines in the modern texts and versions, but the Unitarians and theological modernists of the 19th century believed that the omissions and changes in the critical Greek text supported their theology and tended to weaken orthodox doctrine, and they gave strong support for the modern critical text on this basis. "And the Unitarians have stated that the only two verses that needed to be changed to destroy the doctrine of the Trinity are Romans 9:5 and 1 Tim. 3:16" (Jay Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 51). We have given several examples of this in the book "The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame" under the section on the Unitarians of the 19th century. Following are three of these:

(1) Consider the example of Unitarian G. Vance Smith, who was a member of the English Revised Version translation committee. Smith testified that the textual changes in the ERV and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own Unitarian theology. Some of the passages listed by Smith as being theologically "superior" in the modern texts and versions as opposed to the King James Bible were Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 2:13; and 1 Jn. 5:7, and that is because these passages in the critical text weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity, which Smith rejected. Following are two examples from Smith's pen:

- (a) "The only instance in the N.T. in which the religious worship or adoration of Christ was apparently implied, has been altered by the Revision: 'At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,' [Philippians 2:10] is now to be read 'in the name.' Moreover, no alteration of text or of translation will be found anywhere to make up for this loss; as indeed it is well understood that the N.T. contains neither precept nor example which really sanctions the religious worship of Jesus Christ" (Smith, *Texts and Margins of the Revised New Testament Affecting Theological Doctrine Briefly Reviewed*, p. 47). This statement, of course, is a lie, because Jesus Christ accepted worship repeatedly and never rebuked those who were worshipping Him that they should not do this; but we reprint Smith's statement to demonstrate the damnable heresies of this modern textual critic and how that Unitarians looked upon the textual issue as highly doctrinal.
- (b) "The old reading ["God" in 1 Tim. 3:16] is pronounced untenable by the Revisers, as it has long been known to be by all careful students of the New Testament. ... It is in truth another example of the facility with which ancient copiers could introduce the word *God* into their manuscripts,--a reading which was the natural result of the growing tendency in early Christian times ... to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as 'God manifested in the flesh'" (G. Vance Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).

(2) The example of Unitarian Ezra Abbot, who was a member of the American Standard

Version translation committee.

- (a) Abbot argued that the last clause of Romans 9:5 is a doxology to God and does not refer to Christ.
  - (b) In Acts 20:28 Abbot led the ASV committee to remove “God” and replace it with “the Lord,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the deity of Jesus Christ. Unitarians and theological modernists allege that Jesus is “the Lord” but not actually God.
  - (c) Abbot wrote a long article arguing for the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16 along theological lines.
- (3) Consider the example of the modernists at Harvard College. In 1809 they published an American edition of Griesbach’s critical Greek N.T., BECAUSE ITS TEXTUAL CRITICISM WAS “A MOST POWERFUL WEAPON TO BE USED AGAINST THE SUPPORTERS OF VERBAL INSPIRATION” (Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, p. 2). This was about the time that Harvard capitulated to Unitarianism. Thus, the enemies of Biblical inspiration understood in that day that modern textual criticism weakens key doctrines of the orthodox faith and undermines the absolute authority of the Bible.

**7. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE DOCTRINE OF INDIVIDUAL PASSAGES IS CHANGED BY THE OMISSIONS.***

While the doctrine of the overall Bible is not usually changed by the omissions in the critical Greek text, the doctrine of individual passages is most definitely changed. Since one of the chief principles of Bible interpretation is to interpret according to context, this is an important matter that affects Bible doctrine in general. Consider some examples:

MARK 16:9-20

- (1) The entire ending of the Gospel of Mark is omitted or questioned in the modern versions. For example, the New International Version separates Mark 16:9-20 from the rest of the chapter with a note that says, “The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mk. 16:9-20,” thus discounting the authority of this vital passage in the minds of the readers and effectively removing 12 verses.
- (2) This omission dramatically changes the doctrine of this portion of Scripture and indeed the doctrine of Mark’s entire Gospel. If the omission is allowed to stand, Mark’s Gospel ends in defeat, with no victorious resurrection and ascension, and with the disciples confused and fearful--“And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid” (Mk. 16:8).

### ACTS 8:37

This entire verse is omitted or questioned in the critical text and in the modern versions, and the omission creates a dramatic doctrinal change in the passage. In verse 36 the Ethiopian Eunuch asks, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip’s crucial reply in verse 37 is omitted in the modern text--“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” This is one of the most important N.T. passages on the doctrine of baptism. It shows that baptism must follow faith, that baptism is not a part of one’s salvation but follows after as a testimony. All of this important doctrine is omitted from the passage by the modern critical text, and though this doctrine is taught in other portions of the Scripture it is nowhere taught as clearly as in Acts 8:37.

### 1 TIMOTHY 6:5

- (1) The modern critical text omits the words “apo toioutos ahistemi” (“from such withdraw thyself”) from this verse.
- (2) This is an issue affecting the doctrine of separation. By removing “from such withdraw thyself,” the critical text removes separation from this passage and greatly weakens the passage’s effect.
- (3) Though separation is taught in other passages that are left intact in the critical text, it is nowhere else taught in the way that it is found in 1 Tim. 6:3-5. This is the only passage that instructs believers to separate from those who consent not to “to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (1 Tim. 6:3). In light of conditions in Christianity today, this omission is significant; because there are prominent leaders on every hand who are refusing to consent to the doctrine of godliness by calling for less biblical strictness, by refusing to set moral standards for Christians in matters of dress and entertainment, by neglecting to preach against “worldliness” in any practical manner, by neglecting church discipline, by claiming that God is not concerned about externals, by claiming that a person can believe and be saved without a corresponding zeal for holiness reflected in his life, etc. 1 Timothy 6:5 in the Greek Received New Testament and in the Reformation translations such as the English King James Bible instructs God’s people to withdraw themselves from this type of error, but nowhere in the modern versions do we find this same instruction. Here we see the importance of even the repetitious things in the Bible. Nothing is there by accident and nothing is superfluous, and every change has doctrinal consequences.

Thus, even if there were no overall doctrinal differences between the two Greek texts, the fact remains that hundreds of doctrinal changes are introduced into the various passages. I do not understand the cavalier way that so many Christians treat these matters, but each individual must

make his own decision before the Lord. As for me, I am convinced that these are serious matters that cannot be ignored.

**8. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT KEY DOCTRINES ARE WEAKENED BY THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS.***

While not entirely removing any “major” teaching of Scripture, the Greek text underlying the new versions does seriously weaken some teachings.

**THE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

MATTHEW 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; MARK 5:6

KJV: “And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.” (Matthew 8:2)

RSV: “and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’” (Matthew 8:2)

NASV: “And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

NIV: “A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’” (Matthew 8:2)

CSV: “Right away a man with a serious skin disease came up and knelt before Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’”

- a. In these verses “worship” is changed to “kneel before” in the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the Holman Christian Standard Version (CSV) and other modern versions. It is not done on the basis of the Greek text but is a decision that was made by the translators.
- b. Eleven times in the Greek Received Text and the KJV the Gospels tell us that Christ was worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). It is the same Greek word in every passage -- *proskuneo*.
- c. This is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is Almighty God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10).
- d. The NIV, CSV, and other modern versions remove almost one-half of this unique witness to Christ’s deity, changing “worship” to “kneel before” in Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mk. 5:6. Why did the translators make this decision? I don’t know, but I don’t agree with it and it weakens the doctrine of Christ’s deity.

### MATTHEW 19:17

KJV: “And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

ASV: “And he said unto him, Why askest thou me concerning that which is good? One there is who is good: but if thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments.”

RSV: “And he said to him, ‘Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.’”

NASV: “And He said to him, “Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

NIV: ““Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.’”

CSV: ““Why do you ask Me about what is good?” He said to him. ‘There is only One who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’”

- a. The rich young ruler had addressed Jesus as “Good Master” (Mat. 19:16). According to the Greek Received Text and the King James Version, Jesus replied in such a manner as to correct the young man’s thinking in two ways. The first part of His reply was to correct the young man’s thinking in regard to Jesus’ Person. When Jesus replied, “Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God,” He was forcing the young man to think about the implications of what he was saying. If He was indeed “Good Master,” then He is God; because if He is not God, He is not good, for among the children of men “there are none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psa. 14:3; Rom. 3:12). (The second part of Christ’s reply was to correct the young man’s thinking about salvation, because he was deceiving in thinking that he had actually fulfilled the law; it was given to reveal man’s lost condition and to lead him to salvation in Christ -- Rom. 3:19-24; Gal. 3:24.)
- b. By changing “Why callest thou me good?” to “Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?” the modern versions remove this unique witness to Christ’s deity.
- c. This corruption was probably introduced by Gnostics. “It is surely very likely that this reading, redolent as it is of Greek wisdom, originated among Gnostic heretics of a pseudo-philosophic sort. The 2nd-century Gnostic teacher Valentinus and his disciples Heracleon and Ptolemaeus are known to have philosophized much on Matt. 19:17, and it could easily have been one of these three who made this alteration in the sacred text” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 143).

### MARK 9:24

KJV: “And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I

believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

ASV: “Straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

RSV: “Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’”

NASV: “Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”

NIV: “Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’”

CSV: “Immediately the father of the boy cried out, ‘I do believe! Help my unbelief.’”

By removing the word “Lord,” the critical Greek text and the modern versions remove this testimony that Christ is the Lord.

### MARK 16:9-20

These verses are omitted in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and either omitted or seriously questioned in the modern versions. In the NIV, for example, this section is set apart from the rest of the chapter and introduced with this misleading note: “The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.”

This leaves Mark’s Gospel of Jesus Christ ending with the disciples in fear and confusion, with no resurrection, glorious ascension, and victorious preaching with signs following, which is a significant weakening of Christ’s deity.

### LUKE 2:22

KJV: “And when the days of HER purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.”

NASV: “And when the days of THEIR purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord.”

NIV: “When the time of THEIR purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.”

CSV: “And when the days of THEIR purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord”

The purification of Mary is changed to the purification of both Mary and Jesus in the modern versions. This is contrary to the Law of Moses, which commanded that the purification be made for the mother, and it is contrary to the nature of Christ, who, being sinless, needed no purification. Leviticus 12 is very plain about this. It was the mother who was unclean (Lev. 12:1) and it was the mother who needed to be purified. It is “the days of HER purifying” (Lev. 12:6).

LUKE 24:52

KJV: “And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

RSV: “And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

DARBY: “And they, having done him homage, returned to Jerusalem with great joy.”

20TH CENTURY: “They [bowed to the ground before him and] returned to Jerusalem full of joy.”

YOUNG’S LITERAL: “and they, having bowed before him, did turn back to Jerusalem with great joy.”

The RSV and some other versions, following the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, remove the important words “they worshipped him,” thus removing yet another witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is God.

JOHN 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18

KJV: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

RSV: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.” (John 1:14)

NIV: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

CSV: “The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son, full of grace and truth.”

- a. The NIV and most other modern versions omit “begotten” from these four verses and replace it with “only Son” or “one and only Son.” This is not a textual issue. All of the Greek texts have the word “monogenes.” This is a translational issue. For some reason the translators of the modern version refuse to translate this word properly. It is composed of two words “mono” (only) and “gennao” (to beget or to generate).
- b. To translate “monogenes” as “only” or “one and only” is possible when referring to a normal person. The King James Version does this in Lk. 7:18, 8:42; and 9:38. But to translate “monogenes” as “only” or “one and only” when referring to Christ creates a doctrinal error. Christ is not the only or the one and only son of God. Adam is the son of God (Lk. 3:38); angels are sons of God (Job 1:6); New Testament believers are sons of God (Phil. 2:15).
- (3) The King James Bible is correct. Christ is indeed the only *begotten* Son. The eternal Son of God was begotten *in the flesh* through the miracle of the virgin birth. Every believer is an adopted son of God, but Jesus Christ alone is the “only begotten” Son of God.



## JOHN 1:18

KJV: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

NASV: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”

- a. Here the New American Standard Version, which is popular among some fundamentalists, follows the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts by replacing “the only begotten son” with “the only begotten God.”
- b. The phrase “only begotten God” is heretical upon its face. God was not begotten; He has no beginning. “The word ‘God,’ as opposed to ‘Son,’ communicates nature or essence rather than position or relationship. Therefore, when ‘only begotten’ modifies ‘God’ it introduces a Gnostic concept that Jesus is not fully God, but a begotten god, in essence a mere mighty being. The theological language of Scripture uses descriptive words like holy, everlasting, Almighty, and merciful with the title ‘God’ but does not permit ‘only begotten.’ The phrase ‘only begotten God’ creates an unorthodox mixture, as does the phrase ‘Mary, mother of God.’ Mary was the mother of Jesus, and Jesus was God, but ‘mother of God’ expresses an erroneous concept. In the same way, Jesus is God and is the only begotten Son, but He is not the ‘only begotten God.’ This reading attacks Scriptural Christology and undermines and confuses the doctrine of the full deity of Jesus Christ” (Gary Webb and David Sutton, “New Testament Passages as Examples of Doctrines Changes by Textual Alterations,” *Thou Shalt Keep Them*, edited by Kent Brandenburg, p. 168).
- c. John Burgon proved that this reading, which appears in only five Egyptian Greek manuscripts, could be traced back to the heretic named Valentinus, who denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ (Burgon and Miller, *Causes of Corruption*, pp. 215, 216).
- d. The following important observations on this issue are from Jay P. Green, Sr. (author of *A Literal Translation of the Bible*, *The Modern King James Version*, and *The Interlinear Bible*):
  - (1) “The patristic fathers were insistent upon calling Jesus God. The Gnostic opponents were intent on depicting Jesus as a created Being, an inferior god. John 1 became a battleground because of the many references to Christ as God. Burgon says that the Gnostic Valentinus (c. 150 A.D.) devised the clever theory that the Word and the Son of God were not the same person. The Word, according to the Gnostics, was created to be the ‘artificer,’ the creator to do the things that God has planned, implanting in Him the germ of all things. The Gnostics said that Christ was ‘the Beginning,’ the first of God’s creation, and Valentinus referred to Him as ‘the Only-

begotten God’ and said that He was the entire essence of all the subsequent worlds (Aeons)” (Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, 1994, p. 74).

- (2) “Westcott-Hort, in their 1881 Greek New Testament text, selected a Gnostic-rendering in John 1:18: ‘... the only begotten God’ (*theos*), was substituted by them for ‘...the only begotten Son’ (*huios*). A Divinity that was ‘begotten,’ was therefore inferior or second-rank; so reasoned the Gnostics. Such readings were common to the Egyptian texts; such as the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, p66 and p75. Egypt was the center of ‘Christian Gnosticism,’ and Westcott and Hort, in their love for ‘oldest’ manuscripts, embraced (unknowingly?) two Gnostic-tainted texts. Because of their Gnostic adulteration, the orthodox Christians of the early centuries had nothing to do with what became known as the Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus Aleph manuscripts. Consequently, through non-use, these two (oldest) texts continued to exist until modern times. The very existence of Aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus), the ‘oldest’ surviving manuscripts, has contributed to the unfortunate designation as ‘oldest-and-best,’ in the footnotes of many modern versions of the New Testament. In reality, these two manuscripts are the oldest surviving due to non-use! In the early centuries, the Orthodox refused to make use of them, because of their having been altered or modified by the Gnostics; thus, they were never ‘worn out’ as were the many other Byzantine-type manuscripts. **Now, in the 20th century, many modern translators have followed Lachmann, Tischendorf, Westcott, and Hort, and have fallen into the Gnostic-trap wherein they assume that they must be the best since they are obviously the oldest. Actually, these manuscripts are the oldest and most Gnostic**” (Luther W. Martin, “The History of Gnosticism’s Influence Upon the English Bible,” Appendix I of *Unholy Hands on the Bible*, Vol. II, edited by Jay Green, Sr., p. 399).

- e. In the Received Text there is no question that the Word is also the Son and that both are God. The Word is God (Jn. 1:1); the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:14); the Word is the Son (Jn. 1:18). By changing John 1:18 to “the only begotten God,” Valentinus and his followers broke the clear association between the Word and the Son as well as created confusion about the Person of God.

#### JOHN 1:27

- KJV: “He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”  
 ASV: “even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.”  
 RSV: “even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.”  
 NASV: “It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to

untie.”

NIV: “He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

CSV: “He is the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I’m not worthy to untie.”

The omission of “is preferred before me” destroys the witness of this verse to the deity of Christ. Evangelist Chuck Salliby notes: “Each little expression such as ‘is preferred before me,’ like so many pieces in a puzzle, was designed to make its own contribution to the completed picture of Christ on the Bible page--His Person, works, character, incomparableness, etc. Yet, they are systematically left out wherever possible in the NIV. This is indeed a strange practice. While a secular book generally exaggerates the depiction of its main character, the NIV depreciates that of its own” (Salliby, *If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, p. 21).

### JOHN 3:13

KJV: “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.”

RSV: “No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.”

NASV: “No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”

NIV: “No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven--the Son of Man.”

CSV: “No one has ascended into heaven except the One who descended from heaven—the Son of Man”

- a. The omission of “which is in heaven” destroys this powerful witness to the omniscience of Jesus. One of the traditional evidences that Jesus is God is that He has the characteristics of God, and when the passages demonstrating those characteristics are corrupted, the evidence for His Deity is weakened.
- b. The vast majority of all Greek manuscripts contain the phrase in question. Only roughly two papyri, four uncials (chiefly the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), and one cursive manuscript omit it.

### JOHN 8:59

KJV: “Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

ASV: “They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.”

RSV: "So they took up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple."

NASV: "Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

NIV: "At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."

CSV: "At that, they picked up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus was hidden and went out of the temple complex."

The omission of "going through the midst of them" changes the doctrine of the verse. Whereas the Received Text and the King James Bible teaches here that Jesus supernaturally went out right through the midst of the angry crowd that was trying to kill Him, the modern versions have Jesus hiding Himself.

#### JOHN 10:14

KJV: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine."

ASV: "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me,"

RSV: "I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me."

NASV: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me."

NIV: "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."

CSV: "I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me,"

- a. In the Traditional Text, the way that Jesus knows His sheep and the way He knows the Father and the Father knows Him (v. 15) is different from the way the sheep know Him. The KJV accurately translates the difference. However, there is a change in the critical Greek text so that the sheep are made to know Jesus just as Jesus knows the sheep.
- b. "... this change destroys the exquisite diversity of expression of the original, which implies that whereas the knowledge which subsists between the Father and the Son is mutually identical, the knowledge the creature has of the Creator is of a very different sort; and it puts the creature's knowledge of the Creator on the same level as the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father" (Philip Mauro, *Which Version: Authorised or Revised?*). "And yet it is worth observing that whereas He describes the knowledge which subsists between the FATHER and the SON in language which implies that it is strictly identical on either side, He is careful to distinguish between the knowledge which subsists between the creature and the CREATOR by slightly varying the expression,—thus leaving it to be inferred that it is not, neither indeed can be, on either side the same. God knoweth us with a perfect knowledge. Our so-called 'knowledge' of God is a thing different not only in degree, but in kind. Hence the peculiar form which the

sentence assumes. And this delicate diversity of phrase has been faithfully retained all down the ages, being witnessed to at this hour by every MS. in existence except four now well known to us: viz. Aleph, B, D, L. ... It is a point which really admits of no rational doubt: for does any one suppose that if St. John had written ‘mine own know me,’ 996 MSS. out of 1000 at the end of 1,800 years would exhibit, ‘I am known of mine’?” (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of Corruption*, p. 206).

- c. The source of this corruption was the heretic Manes. “But in fact it is discovered that these words of our LORD experienced depravation at the hands of the Manichaeen heretics. Besides inverting the clauses, (and so making it appear that such knowledge begins on the side of Man,) Manes (A.D. 216) obliterated the peculiarity above indicated. Quoting from his own fabricated Gospel, he acquaints us with the form in which these words were exhibited in that mischievous production. This we learn from Epiphanius and from Basil” (Burgon and Miller, *The Causes of Corruption*, pp. 206, 207).

### ACTS 2:30

KJV: “Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, HE WOULD RAISE UP CHRIST to sit on his throne.

ASV: “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne.”

RSV: “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne.”

NASV: “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne.”

NIV: “But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.”

CSV: “Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants on his throne.”

By omitting the important words “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ,” the modern versions, following the Alexandrian text, destroy this clear testimony that Jesus Himself fulfills the promise to David. The heretics tried to disassociate Jesus from the Christ, and this omission falls right into their hands.

### ACTS 3:13

KJV: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his SON Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.”

ASV: “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath

glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him.”

RSV: “The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.”

NASV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, the one whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.”

NIV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.”

CSV: “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.”

a. The critical text changes “his Son Jesus” to “his servant Jesus,” thus removing the witness to the deity of Christ from this verse.

b. In the Greek Received Text, Christ is called the Son of God or God’s Son 126 times, whereas he is called “servant” only once, and that is in Matt. 12:18, which is a quotation of Isaiah 42:1.

### ACTS 20:28

KJV: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed THE CHURCH OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH PURCHASED WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.”

ASV: “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.”

RSV: “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.”

NIV: Footnote: “many manuscripts [read] *of the Lord.*”

The critical Greek text supports the change from “church of God” to “church of the Lord.” This change is significant because ancient heretics such as Arians and modern heretics such as Unitarians and Jehovah’s Witnesses make a distinction between Jesus as “the Lord” and Jesus as “God.” If it was “God” that purchased the church with His own blood, then the Jesus that died on the cross is clearly God and there is no room for heretical depravation; but if it were a more ambiguous “Lord” that purchased the church, then there is more room for the doctrine of ancient and modern heretics that while Jesus is Lord he is not the same as God.

## ROMANS 9:5

KJV: “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh CHRIST CAME, WHO IS OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER. Amen.”

ERV: “... Christ who is over all, God be forever praised.”

RSV: “To them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen.”

NIV: “Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.” [Footnote: “or, ‘Christ who is over all, God be forever praised.’”]

- a. The ERV with its textual change and the NIV with its footnote and the RSV by adding a period between “Christ” and “God” undermine this witness to the deity of Christ.
- b. Bible scholar/translator Jay Green, Sr., notes: “The NIV footnote is a gloss preferred by those who do not believe that Christ is co-equal with God in essence and attributes. When the Revised Version (1881) inserted it, Burgon quoted 60 patristic fathers as using this verse to prove the Godhood of Christ. And the Unitarians have stated that the only two verses that needed to be changed to destroy the doctrine of the Trinity are Romans 9:5 and 1 Tim. 3:16” (Green, *The Gnostics, the New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, p. 51).
- c. James White claims that the King James Version is ambiguous in this verse.
  - (1) Yet the KJV follows the Greek almost word for word and gives an accurate and clear translation in English. The verse does not say that Christ is blessed of God forever; it says He is GOD blessed for ever. It is one of the most powerful statements to the Godhood of Christ in the Bible, and it is plain for anyone who has ears to hear.
  - (2) Unitarians who were on the committees that revised the King James Bible (the English Revised Version of 1881 and the American Standard Version of 1901) wanted to change the KJV translation of Romans 9:5 because they understand that it clearly supported the doctrine that Christ is God.
  - (3) Godly English commentators of generations past had no problem with this verse as it stands in the King James Version. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) is an example. He saw this verse as it stands in the KJV as “a very full proof of the Godhead of Christ; he is not only over all, as Mediator, but he is God blessed for ever.”
  - (4) We therefore do not accept White’s charge that the KJV is weak in Romans 9:5 about Christ’s deity. Every passage must be interpreted in the context of the wider testimony of Scripture, and when we do so with the KJV in Romans 9:5 we see that

Christ is both God and God blessed. That is exactly what the rest of the Bible says! It speaks of the mystery of the Trinity.

#### ROMANS 14:10

KJV: “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.”

ASV: “But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.”

RSV: “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

NASV: “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

NIV: “You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.”

CSV: “But you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”

Modern versions such as the ASV, RSV, NASV, and NIV follow the Alexandrian manuscripts by changing “judgment seat of Christ” to “judgment seat of God.” When we compare Isaiah 45:23, the “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ directly as Jehovah God, whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not. Thus, this change significantly weakens the Bible’s overall testimony to Christ’s deity.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:47

KJV: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is THE LORD from heaven.”

ASV: “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven.”

RSV: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.”

NASV: “The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.”

NIV: “The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.”

CSV: “The first man was from the earth and made of dust; the second man is from heaven.”

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, omit “the Lord,” thus removing this powerful and important witness to Christ’s deity.

#### EPHESIANS 3:9

KJV: “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things BY JESUS CHRIST.”



ASV: “and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things.”

RSV: “and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”

NASV: “And to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things;”

NIV: “and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.”

CSV: “and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things.”

By removing the crucial phrase “by Jesus Christ,” the modern versions destroy this verse’s powerful witness that Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. This verse as it stands in the Greek Received Text and the KJV and other Reformation Bibles also teaches us that Jesus was not created, since “ALL things” were created by him.

### 1 TIMOTHY 3:16

KJV: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: GOD WAS MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

ASV: “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”

RSV: “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

NASV: “By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

NIV: “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.”

TEV: “No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion: He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven.”

CSV: “And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

- a. By replacing the word “God” with the general pronoun “he” we are robbed of one of the plainest witnesses to Christ’s deity in the entire Bible and are left with a

meaningless reference to an unidentified, ambiguous “he” that was manifested in the flesh. If the one who was manifested in the flesh was not God, there is no mystery, because even ordinary men are manifested in the flesh.

b. There are three main readings for this verse in the Greek manuscripts.

(1) “who” -- The Sinaiticus and three cursive manuscripts have “who.”

(2) “which” -- Codex D is the only Greek manuscript containing this reading, but it appears in most Latin manuscripts and most ancient versions, including the Syriac Peshitta, the Coptic, and the Old Latin.

(3) “God” -- 98% of Greek manuscripts (some 600), including most of the uncials and all of the lectionaries, contain “God.” Though Codex A no longer has the line through the O indicating God, it was there and was seen and testified by many textual editors prior to 1765, including Fell, Mill, Bentley, Wettstein, Bengel, and Woide. This was documented by John Burgon in *The Revision Revised*, p. 434.

c. The reading of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, “the mystery of godliness, *who*” is grammatically strange, “even more pathologic in Greek than it is in English. ... it is a nominative relative pronoun with no antecedent in the context; I regard the claim that it came from a primitive hymn to be gratuitous, a desperate effort to save an obviously bad reading” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identify of the New Testament Text*). “Accordingly ... ‘the mystery of godliness, *which*’ is generally regarded as an attempt to make the difficult reading intelligible. ... It is found in only one Greek MS, Codex D, and in no Greek Father before the fifth century” (Pickering).

d. Dr. Edward F. Hills observed that the modern versions create readings out of thin air in this verse because the grammatical construction requires something different from that which is in the Alexandrian text: “Undoubtedly the Traditional reading, ‘*God was manifest in the flesh,*’ was the original reading. This was altered by the Gnostics into the Western reading, ‘*which was manifest in the flesh,*’ in order to emphasize their favorite idea of mystery. Then this Western reading was later changed into the meaningless Alexandrian reading, ‘*who was manifest in the flesh.*’ Since Westcott and Hort, critics have adopted the Alexandrian reading and have translated the word *who* as ‘*He who,*’ insisting that Paul is here quoting a fragment of an early Christian hymn. But what could Paul have meant by this quotation? Did he mean that the mystery of godliness was the fact that Christ was manifest in the flesh? If he did, why then did he not make his meaning plain by substituting the word Christ for the word He who, making the quotation read, ‘*Christ was manifest in the flesh,*’ etc.? Did he mean that Christ was the mystery of godliness? Why then did he not place the word *Christ* in apposition to the word *who*, making the

quotation read, ‘*Christ, He who was manifest in the flesh,*’ etc.? But, according to the critics, Paul did neither of these two things. Instead he quoted an incomplete sentence, a subject without a predicate, and left it dangling. The makers of the RSV adopt the Alexandrian reading and translate it, *He was manifested in the flesh,* etc., and then place under it a note, Greek, ‘who.’ But if the Greek is ‘*who,*’ how can the English be ‘*He*’? This is not translation but the creation of an entirely new reading. The change, therefore, that the translators felt compelled to make from ‘*who*’ to ‘*He*’ comes as a belated admission that the reading, ‘*who was manifest in the flesh,*’ cannot be interpreted satisfactorily. And ought not unprejudiced students of the problem to regard this as proof that Paul never wrote the verse in this form but rather as it stands in the Traditional Text, ‘*God was manifest in the flesh*?’” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, pp. 137, 138).

- e. Unitarians such as George Vance Smith of the English Revision committee of 1881 understood that the removal of “God” in this verse was a theological issue. He claimed that the word “God” was added by Christians in early centuries because of “the growing tendency in early Christian times to look upon the humble Teacher as the incarnate Word, and therefore as ‘God manifested in the flesh’” (Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).
- f. Terence Brown, respected former Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, makes the following comment in his masterly paper “God Was Manifest in the Flesh”: “Countless millions of the Lord’s people, from the dawn of the Christian era to the present day, have read these words in their Bibles precisely as they appear in our Authorised Version, but now this powerful testimony to the Godhead of our Saviour is to be swept out of the Scriptures and to disappear without trace.”

## 1 JOHN 4:2

KJV: “... Jesus Christ IS come in the flesh...”

RSV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NASV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NIV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

NKJV: “... Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh...”

CSV: “...Jesus Christ HAS come in the flesh.”

- a. The Greek word translated “is come” in the KJV, “*eleluthota*,” is a perfect participle and means “that the Word not only has been made flesh but is still flesh; He came in flesh, is now in flesh, and will forever be in flesh; His incarnation will have no end” (James Sightler, *Tabernacle Essays on Bible Translations*, p. 33).
- b. To translate this Greek word as “has come” has serious theological implications, especially in the context of John’s epistle, which was written to refute Christological heresies that were tempting the churches even in that day. Heretics then and now

teach that Jesus is no longer a man or is no longer in the flesh. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus is now a man, claiming that he is some sort of spirit being. Many modernists claim that Jesus did not rise bodily but only spiritually, that while he *was* in the flesh he *is* no longer so. A proper translation of 1 John 4:2 destroys these heresies, whereas the mis-translation found in the modern versions leaves room for them.

### 1 JOHN 4:3

KJV: "And every spirit that CONFESSETH NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

ASV: "and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already."

RSV: "and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already."

NASV: "and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

NIV: "but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world."

CSV: "But every spirit who does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist; you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now."

The genuine test to determine the false spirit of antichrist is removed from the modern versions by the corruption of 1 John 4:3. The KJV requires that one confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, whereas the modern versions only require that one acknowledge or confess Jesus. There is a great difference between these two tests. Every false spirit will "confess Jesus" in a general sense (even Unitarians, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses), but the spirit of antichrist will not "confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," meaning that Jesus Christ is the very Messiah, the very God manifest in the flesh, promised in Old Testament prophecy (e.g., Isa. 7:14; 9:6). This is a serious textual and translational error.

### 1 JOHN 5:7-8

KJV: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

ASV: "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there

are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one.”

RSV: “And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth. There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree.”

NIV: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

CSV: “For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and these three are in agreement.”

- a. The statement in 1 John 5:7 in the KJV, called the “Johannine Comma,” is a powerful witness to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is an equal member of the Godhead. It is the clearest statement of the Trinity in the entire Bible, but the modern versions omit it.
- b. Erasmus added the *Johannine Comma* to the 3rd edition of his Greek N.T., but the reason was not that a Greek manuscript was found that contained it. The main reason that the editors of the Greek Received Text (not only Erasmus but all of them) included the *Johannine Comma* was the general conviction that it was inspired Scripture and that it had been preserved in the Latin. As Edward F. Hills observed, “But whatever may have been the immediate cause, still, in the last analysis, it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine comma* in the Textus Receptus, but the usage of the Latin speaking Church” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 209).
- c. Following are some of the reasons why we believe that the *Johannine Comma* is Scripture. Note that the following is only a brief summary of some of the reasons. A much more extensive 13-fold defense of this important verse is given in *The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

(1) The first consideration is **THE THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**. “The strength of forgery or interpolation is similarity and not uniqueness. The Trinitarian formula, ‘Father, Word, and Holy Spirit’ is unique not only for John but for all NT writers. The usual formula, ‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’ would have been assuredly used by a forger. [Incidentally, this argument is an antidote for rationalists who repudiate the authenticity of the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter. Peter uses a unique spelling for his name (*Sumeon*), which is also the first word of the Epistle, to demonstrate his mark of authorship. What forger would pass three dollar bills? Only the authority, the government, would attempt such a unique action” (Thomas Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s “The King James Version Debate,”* 1980).

(2) The second consideration is **THE GRAMMATICAL ARGUMENT**. “The omission of the Johannine Comma leaves much to be desired grammatically. The words ‘Spirit,’ ‘water’ and ‘blood’ are all neuters, yet they are treated as masculine in verse 8. This is strange if the *Johannine Comma* is omitted, but it can be accounted for if it is retained; the masculine nouns ‘Father’ and ‘word’ in verse 7 regulate the gender in the succeeding verse due to the power of attraction principle. The argument that the ‘Spirit’ is personalized and therefore masculine is offset by verse 6 which is definitely referring to the personal Holy Spirit yet using the neuter gender. [I.H. Marshall is a current voice for this weak argument: ‘It is striking that although Spirit, water, and blood are all neuter nouns in Greek, they are introduced by a clause expressed in the masculine plural ... Here in 1 John he clearly regards the Spirit as personal, and this leads to the personification of the water and the blood’ (*The Epistles of John*, 1978), p. 237n.]] Moreover, the words ‘that one’ (*to hen*) in verse 8 have no antecedent if verse 7 is omitted, [Marshall calls this construction ‘unparalleled,’ p. 237] whereas if verse 7 is retained, then the antecedent is ‘these three are one’ (*to hen*)” (Thomas Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s “The King James Version Debate,”* 1980). [Note: The grammatical argument has been treated lightly by modern textual critics, but its importance was understood by GREGORY NAZIANZUS (Oration XXXII: Fifth Theological Oration: “On the Holy Spirit,” A.D. 390; see Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*), FREDERIC NOLAN (*An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament*, 1815), ROBERT DABNEY (“The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” 1891), THOMAS MIDDLETON (*The Doctrine of the Greek article: applied to the criticism and illustration of the New Testament*, 1833), MATTHEW HENRY (Commentary on the Whole Bible, 1706), EDWARD F. HILLS (*The King James Bible Defended: a Space-age Defense of the Historic Christian Faith*, 1956), and LOUIS GAUSSEN (*The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, 1934), to name a few. I take my stand with these men.]

(3) Another consideration is **THE ARGUMENT FROM THE GREEK MANUSCRIPT RECORD**. D.A. Carson, probably following Bruce Metzger’s *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (3rd edition corrected, 1975), claims there are only four MSS containing the *Johannine Comma*. In fact, the UBS 4th Greek N.T. lists 8 manuscripts that contain the *comma*, four in the text (61, 629, 2318, 918) and four in the margin (88, 221, 429, 636). In the 16th and 17th centuries, both the Catholic and the Reformation editors were convinced of the authenticity of 1 John 5:7 based on the Greek manuscript evidence that was before them. It is probable that some of this evidence has been lost. Consider the following important statements: “Erasmus, in his Notes on the place, owns that the Spanish Edition took it from a Vatican MS, and Father Amelote, in his Notes on his own Version of the Greek Testament, affirms, that he had seen this verse

in the most ancient copy of the Vatican Library. The learned *Author of the Enquiry into the Authority of the Complutensian Edition of the New Testament* [Richard Smalbroke], in a letter to Dr. Bentley, from these and many other arguments, proves it to be little less than certain, that the controverted passage 1 Joh. v.7 was found in the ancient Vatican MS, so particularly recommended by Pope Leo to the Editors at Complutum” (Leonard Twells, *A Critical Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament*, 1731, II, p. 128). “Can we peruse the account which is given of the labours of Laurentius Valla [he collated the Latin against the Greek in the 15th century], of the Complutensian Editors of the Old and New Testaments, of Robert Stephens, the Parisain printer, and of Theodore Beza, without believing, that they found this passage in several valuable Greek manuscripts? All those learned and honourable men could not surely have combined to assert, in the face of the Christian world, that they had examined and collated manuscripts which contained this verse. Where would be our candour and charity, if we should suppose them capable of such an intentional and deliberate falsification of the Scriptures, and of doing this in concert? Would not this be to rob them of their honest and well-earned reputation, for learning and worth, for probity and honour, and to stigmatize them as cheats and impostors? It is supposed, that those Greek manuscripts which were used by the first editors of the New Testament, have been lost by being neglected, or destroyed after they had been used for this purpose. The manuscripts which were used by the Complutensian Editors, under the direction of Cardinal Ximenes, it is said, were never returned to the library of the Vatican, but are either lost, or lie concealed in some of the libraries in Spain. The manuscripts which were borrowed by Robert Stephens, from the Royal Library at Paris, have never found their way back thither, or at least, they are not now, it is said, in that Library. ... Though, however, it could be proved, that there did not exist at this hour, a single Greek manuscript which exhibited the verse in question, yet still the testimonies of their former existence, which have been produced, should overbalance, it is conceived, in the view of every unprejudiced mind, any unfavourable presumption arising from this circumstance” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

- (4) Consider, too, ***THE ARGUMENT FROM THE WRITINGS OF ANCIENT CHURCH LEADERS***. Following are some quotations that refer to the *Johannine Comma* from church writings dating to the first eight centuries of the church age:
  - (a) **Tertullian (c. 200 A.D.)** -- “The connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, makes an unity of these three, one with another, which three are one,--not one person; in like manner as it is said, I and my Father are one, to denote the unity of substance, and not the singularity of

number” (*Against Praxeas*, II, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*). “We find, therefore, that about A.D. 200, not much more than an hundred years after this Epistle was written, Tertullian refers to the verse in question, to prove that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are one in essence; a satisfactory evidence, that this doctrine, though asserted by some in our time, to be a dangerous novelty, was really the acknowledged faith of Christians in those early times” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

- (b) **Cyprian of Carthage (c. 250 A.D.)** -- “The Lord says ‘I and the Father are one’ and likewise it is written of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ‘And these three are one’” (*De Unitate Ecclesiae*, [On The Unity of the Church], *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Church Fathers Down to A.D.325*). Here Cyprian quotes from John 10:30 and 1 John 5:7. Nowhere else in Scripture do we find the words “and these three are one.” “It is true that Facundus, a 6th-century African bishop, interpreted Cyprian as referring to the following verse, but, as Scrivener (1883) remarks, it is ‘surely safer and more candid’ to admit that Cyprian read the Johannine comma in his New Testament manuscript ‘than to resort to the explanation of Facundus’” (Edward Hills, p. 210). Leonard Twells adds, “This noble testimony invincibly proves, that the passage now under debate, was in approved copies of the third century” (*A Critical Examination of the Late New Text and Version of the New Testament*, 1731, II, p. 134).
- (c) **Athanasius (c. 350 A.D.)** quotes 1 John 5:7 at least three times in his works (R.E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible*, Epistles of John, 1982, p. 782). “Among the works of Athanasius which are generally allowed to be genuine, is a Synopsis of this Epistle. In his summary of the fifth chapter, he seems plainly to refer to this verse, when he says, ‘The Apostle here teaches, the unity of the Son with the Father’ [Du Pin, Art. “Athanasius,” London Edition, vol. 8, p. 34]. But it would be difficult to find any place in this chapter where this unity is taught, save in the seventh verse” (Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*).
- (d) **Priscillian (380 A.D.)**, who was beheaded in 385 by Emperor Maximus on the charge of heresy, quoted 1 John 5:7. “As John says ‘and there are three which give testimony on earth, the water, the flesh the blood, and these three are in one, and there are three which give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one in Christ Jesus’” (*Liber Apologeticus*).
- (e) **Idacius Clarus (380 A.D.)**, Priscillian’s principal adversary and accuser, also cited 1 John 5:7 (Edward Hills, p. 210).
- (f) **Theodorus (4th century)** -- In “A treatise on one God in the Trinity, from the Epistle of John the Evangelist” he stated that John, in his Epistle, presents God as a Trinity (Ben David, “Three Letters Addressed to the Editor of *The*



*Quarterly Review*, in which is Demonstrated the Genuineness of The Three Heavenly Witnesses--I John v. 7," London, 1825, <http://www.1john57.com/threelatters3.htm>). Ben David observes: "This is a remarkable testimony, as it implies the existence and notoriety of the verse about the middle of the fourth century."

- (g) **Gregory of Nazanzius (4th century)** -- "What about John then, when in his Catholic Epistle he says that there are Three that bear witness, the Spirit and the Water and the Blood? Do you think he is talking nonsense? First, because he has ventured to reckon under one numeral things which are not consubstantial, though you say this ought to be done only in the case of things which are consubstantial. For who would assert that these are consubstantial? Secondly, because he had not been consistent in the way he has happened upon his terms; for after using Three in the masculine gender he adds three words which are neuter, contrary to the definitions and laws which you and your grammarians have laid down. For what is the difference between putting a masculine Three first, and then adding One and One and One in the neuter, or after a masculine One and One and One to use the Three not in the masculine but in the neuter, which you yourself disclaim in the case of Deity?" (*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*). "Metzger claims that 'the passage is quoted by none of the Greek Fathers.' Such a bold assertion is also misleading because Gregory of Nazanzius (a Greek Church Father from the fourth century), although not directly quoting the passage, specifically alludes to the passage and objects to the grammatical structure if the Comma is omitted (Metzger, on the other hand, would have one to believe that the Greek Church Fathers knew nothing of the passage)" (Jesse Boyd, "And These Three Are One: A Case for the Authenticity of 1 John 5:7-8," 1999, <http://www.ovrInd.com/Bible/casefor1john57.html>).
- (h) **Eucherius of Lyons (434 A.D.)** -- "... in a tract, called *Formulae Spiritualis Intelligentiae*, c. 11, para. 3, 4, sets down both the seventh and eighth verses of the fifth chapter of St. John's first epistle, in the same order as our printed editions have them, precluding thereby the common cavil, that the seventh verse is only a mystical explication of the eighth" (Twells, II, p. 135).
- (i) **Vigilius Tapsensis (484 A.D.)** "twice in his books concerning the Trinity, printed among the Works of Athanasius (viz. Book first, and seventh) and also in his Tract against Varimadus the Arian, under the name of Idacius Clarus, cites 1 John 5:7" (Twells, II, p. 135).
- (j) **Victor Vitensis (484 A.D.)**, "contemporary with Vigilius, writes the *History of the Vandalic Persecution*, in which he sets down a Confession of Faith, which Eugenius Bishop of Carthage, and the orthodox bishops of Africa, offered to King Hunnerick, a favourer of the Arians, who called upon those bishops to justify the catholic doctrine of the Trinity. In this Confession, presented Anno 484, among other places of Scripture, they defended the orthodox clause from 1 John 5:7, giving thereby the highest attestation, that

they believed it to be genuine. Nor did the Arians, that we can find, object to it. So that the contending parties of those days seem to have agreed in reputing that passage authentic” (Twells, II, pp. 135, 136).

- (k) **Eugenius at the Council of Carthage (485 A.D.)** -- “... and in order that we may teach until now, more clearly than light, that the Holy Spirit is now one divinity with the Father and the Son. It is proved by the evangelist John, for he says, ‘there are three which bear testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one’” (Victor of Vitensis, *Historia persecutionis Africanae*, quoted from Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 43).
- (l) **Fulgentius Ruspensis (507 A.D.)**, “another orthodox writer of the same country, cites the controverted words in three several places of his Works. Which further evinces, that the Arians about Hunneric, had not been able to disprove that text. For if they had, no writer for the Catholic side of the question, would have dared to use a baffled testimony, whilst the memory of that defeat was yet recent” (Twells, II, p. 136).
- (m) **Cassiodorius (550 A.D.)**, “a patrician of Rome, a person remarkable for zealously recommending the choice of ancient and correct copies of the Bible to the monks under his direction, for their constant use, copies purged from error by collation with the Greek text; and that, in doubtful places, they should consult two or three ancient and correct books. So affectionately concerned was he for the purity of the sacred text, that whilst he left the correcting of other books to his Notaries, he would trust no hand but his own in reforming the Bible. Further, he himself declares, that he wrote his *Treatise of Orthography*, purposely to promote the faithful transcribing of the Scripture. It must therefore be of considerable importance, in the present dispute, to know that the reading of his copy, 1 John 5:7. And of all his Tracts, none was so likely to satisfy our curiosity as that entitled *Complexiones*, which were short and running notes, on the apostolical epistles and Acts, and the Revelation. ... But Cassiodorius’s *Complexiones* were given up for lost, among other treasures of ancient literature, when, soon after the learned and judicious Mr. Martin had ended his labours upon this subject, that piece was unexpectedly found in the Library of Verona, and published at Florence by Scipio Maffei [Francesco Scipione Maffei (1675-1755)], An. 1721. And from thence we have all the satisfaction we can desire, that the contested passage was in Cassiodorius’s copy. For in his comment on 1 John 5:1 and following verses, he concludes with these words: *Testificantur in Terra tria Mysteria, Aqua, Sanguis, & Spiritus: quae in Passione Domini leguntur completa: in Caelo autem Pater, & Filius, & Spiritus Sanctus, & hi tres unus est Deus.* [The three mysteries testify (bear witness) on earth, the water, blood and the spirit, which are read in full in the passion of (our) Lord: likewise, in heaven, the Father, and Son, and the Holy

Spirit, and these three, one is God.] After which he proceeds to cite and explain the ninth verse of that chapter” (Twells, II, pp. 136, 137).

- (n) **Maximus, a Greek writer (645 A.D.)**, author of the *Disputes in the Council of Nice* (among the works of Athanasius) cites therein 1 John 5:7 (Twells, II, p. 129).
  - (o) **Isidore Mercator (785 A.D.)** “is supposed to have forged the Decretal Epistles published by him. In the first of Pope Hyginus, 1 John 5:7,8 are cited, though the present order of them is inverted, as it was probably in Cassiodorus’s copy also. The spurious character of these epistles no way hurts their authority, for the contested text being in the copies of those times” (Twells, II, p. 137).
  - (p) **Ambrosius Authpertus (8th century)**, “of the same age, wrote a commentary upon the Revelations yet extant, in which the words of 1 John 5:7 are brought in as explicatory of Revelation 1:5” (Twells, II, p. 138).
  - (q) In the *Glossa Ordinaria* of **Walafrid Strabo (9th century)**, “a work universally approved, we see the passages of the three Witnesses in Heaven, both in the text and the commentary” (Twells, II, p. 138).
  - (r) **“Lastly, we find no one Latin writer complaining of this passage (which appears to have been extant in many copies from the fifth century inclusive) as an interpolation, which is a very good negative evidence, that no just objection could be made to its genuineness. The Preface of Jerome blames some translators for omitting it, but till the days of Erasmus, the insertion of it was never deemed a fault”** (Twells, II, p. 138).
- (5) Another argument is from **THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THOSE TIMES**. The following is excerpted from Robert Lewis Dabney, “The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek,” *Southern Presbyterian Review*, April 1871: “We must also consider the time and circumstances in which the passage was written. John tells his spiritual children that his object is to warn them against seducers (2:26), whose heresy was a denial of the proper Sonship and incarnation (4:2) of Jesus Christ. We know that these heretics were Corinthians and Nicolaitanes. Irenaeus and other early writers tell us that they all vitiated the doctrine of the Trinity. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was not miraculously born of a virgin, and that the Word, Christ, was not truly and eternally divine, but a sort of angelic ‘Aion’ associated with the natural man Jesus up to his crucifixion. The Nicolaitanes denied that the ‘Aion’ Christ had a real body, and ascribed to him only a phantasmal body and blood. It is against these errors that John is fortifying his ‘children’ and this is the very point of the disputed 7th verse. If it stands, then the whole passage is framed to exclude both heresies. In verse 7 he refutes the Corinthian by declaring the unity of Father, Word and Spirit, and with the strictest accuracy employing the neuter HEN EISIN to fix the point which Cerinthus denied--the unity of the Three Persons in One common substance. He then refutes the Nicolaitanes by declaring the proper humanity of Jesus, and the

actual shedding, and application by the Spirit, of that water and blood of which he testifies as on eyewitness in the Gospel. John thus warns his spiritual ‘children’ against ‘seducers’ who taught error regarding the true divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ and regarding His incarnation and true humanity, and when we further see John precisely expose these errors in verses 7 and 8 of chapter 5, we are constrained to acknowledge that there is a coherency in the whole passage which presents strong internal evidence for the genuineness of the ‘Received Text.’”

- (6) Consider, too, **THE ARGUMENT FROM ITS PRESERVATION AMONG BIBLE BELIEVERS**. The Lord Jesus Christ indicated that His Words would be preserved through the process of the Great Commission, as the Scriptures were received, kept, taught, and passed on to the next generation by Bible-believing churches (Matt. 28:18-20). This is guaranteed by the Christ’s power and his continual presence among the churches. When we look at church history in this light, the issue of 1 John 5:7 becomes plainer. Consider the versional evidence in favor of this verse:

- (a) 1 John 5:7 is found in some of the **SYRIAC** manuscripts (though not the majority) (*The New Testament Translated from the Syriac Peshito Version*, James Murdock, 1852, note on 1 John 5:7). 1 John 5:7 was printed in Gutbier’s *Lexicon Syricum concerdatntiale omnes N.T. Syriaci* (1664); it is obvious, therefore, that Gutbier found this important verse in Syriac manuscripts with which he was familiar. It was also printed by E. Hutter in 1599 in the Syriac portion of his polyglot (e-mail from Michael Maynard, May 11, 2005).
- (b) 1 John 5:7 was in the **OLD LATIN** that was used by Bible believers in Europe. Dr. Frederick Nolan (1784-1864) spent 28 years tracing the history of the European Italic or Old Latin version and in 1815 published his findings in *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament, in which the Greek manuscripts are newly classed, the integrity of the Authorised Text vindicated, and the various readings traced to their origin*. Nolan believed that the old Latin got its name Italic from the churches in northern Italy that remained separated from Rome and that this text was maintained by separatist Waldensian believers. He concluded that 1 John 5:7 “was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate” (Nolan, *Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, pp. xvii, xviii).
- (c) 1 John 5:7 was also in the **LATIN “VULGATE”** that had a wide influence throughout the Dark Ages. The Catholic Church used it, but so did many non-Catholic believers. Bruce Metzger observes that the oldest manuscript of the Jerome vulgate, Codex Fuldensis (A.D. 546), does not include the *Johannine Comma*; but this fact must be modified by other evidence. For one, Jerome

himself believed 1 John 5:7 was genuine Scripture and testified that heretics had removed it from some manuscripts. He testified that “irresponsible translators left out this testimony in the Greek codices” (*Prologue to the Canonical Epistles*; quoted from Strouse, *A Critique of D.A. Carson’s “The King James Version Debate”*). Jerome said further in his Prologue: “... these Epistles I have restored to their proper order; which, if arranged agreeably to the original text, and faithfully interpreted in Latin diction, would neither cause perplexity to the readers, nor would the various readings contradict themselves, especially in that place where we read the unity of the Trinity laid down in the Epistle of John. In this I found translators (or copyists) widely deviating from the truth; who set down in their own edition the names only of the three witnesses, that is, the Water, Blood, and Spirit; but omit the testimony of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; by which, above all places, the Divinity of the father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is proved to be one” (*Prologue to the Canonical Epistles*; quoted from Ben David, *Three Letters Addressed to the Editor of The Quarterly Review, in which is Demonstrated the Genuineness of The Three Heavenly Witnesses--1 John v. 7*, London, 1825, <http://www.1john57.com/threeletters3.htm>). Second, 1 John 5:7 is found in the vast majority of extant Latin manuscripts, 49 out of every 50, according to Frederick Scrivener. Third, 1 John 5:7 is found in many of the ancient Latin manuscripts, such as *Ulmensis* (c. 850) and *Toletanus* (988). The *Johannine Comma* is found “in twenty-nine of the fairest, oldest, and most correct of extant Vulgate manuscripts” (Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8*, p. 343).

- (d) 1 John 5:7 was in the **ROMAUNT OR OCCITAN** New Testaments used by the Waldenses dating back to the 12th century. This was the language of the troubadours and men of letters in the Dark Ages. It was the predecessor of French and Italian. The Romaunt Bibles were small and plain, designed for missionary work. “This version was widely spread in the south of France, and in the cities of Lombardy. It was in common use among the Waldenses of Piedmont, and it was no small part, doubtless, of the testimony borne to truth by these mountaineers to preserve and circulate it” (J. Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, vol. 1, chapter 7, “The Waldenses”). I examined the copy of the Romaunt New Testament located at the Cambridge University Library in April 2005, but it does not have the Epistles of John. Other surviving Romaunt New Testament do contain it, though. The following is from Justin Savino <[dojustly@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dojustly@sbcglobal.net)>, May 11, 2005: “The Zurich codex [of the Romaunt] I have that is similar to the Dublin a Grenoble (or so I am told) does have 1 John 5:7. The direct quote is ‘Car trey son que donan testimoni al cel lo payre e lo filh e lo sant spirit e aquesti trey son un.’ Translated, ‘but three are there that five testimony in heaven the father and the son and the holy spirit and these three are one.’”
- (e) 1 John 5:7 was in the **TEPL**, which is an old German translation used by

Waldenses from the 14th through the 15 centuries. Comba, who wrote a history of the Waldenses, said the Tepl was a Waldensian translation (Comba, *Waldenses of Italy*, pp. 190-192). Comba sites two authorities, Ludwig Keller and Hermann Haupt, for this information. Comba also states that the Tepl was based on old Latin manuscripts rather than the Jerome vulgate. The Tepl's size identifies it with the small Bibles carried by the Waldensian evangelists on their dangerous journeys across Europe. Justin Savino, who has examined the Tepl, informed me that it contains the *Johannine Comma*.

- (f) 1 John 5:7 was in the old **FRENCH** translations. A translation of the whole Bible in French first appeared in the 13th century, and "a much used version of the whole Bible was published in 1487 by Jean de Rely" (Norlie, *The Translated Bible*, p. 52).
- (g) 1 John 5:7 was in the old **GERMAN** translations, which first appeared in the 13th and 14th centuries. A complete German Bible appeared before the invention of printing (Norlie, p. 53). There were at least 12 different editions of the Bible into German before the discovery of America in 1492. The first printed German Bible appeared in 1466 (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 1934, p. 243).
- (h) 1 John 5:7 was in the **SPANISH** Bibles, beginning with the one printed in Valencia in 1478 by Bonifacio Ferrer (M'Crie, *History of the Reformation in Spain*, p. 191).
- (j) 1 John 5:7 was in the **BOHEMIAN** Bible printed by the Brethren in 1488.
- (k) 1 John 5:7 stood in the **ENGLISH** Bibles for 500 years, beginning with the first English Bible in 1380, until the publication of the English Revised Version of 1881. The first English New Testament, completed by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers in 1380, contained this verse. The *Johannine Comma* was in the Tyndale New Testament of 1526, the Coverdale of 1535, the Matthew's of 1537, the Great Bible of 1539, the Geneva of 1557, the Bishops of 1568, and the King James Bible of 1611. The first popular English Bible to remove 1 John 5:7 was the New International Version of 1973 and this version has still not taken over the sales of the King James Bible. From the time of the British Empire to the present, English has been a prominent world language. It is the international language in these modern times, the language of commerce, aviation, and science. The witness of the English Bible, therefore, has great significance. Thus we see that the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7 comes down to us by the hands of Bible believers and churches that held the apostolic faith at great cost through the Dark Ages, through the Protestant Reformation, up to our very day. In light of Matthew 28:18-20, this is a strong witness to its apostolic authenticity.

- (7) Consider, too, **THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SILENCE OF 1500 YEARS OF CHURCH HISTORY**. "It is an observation, we apprehend, of considerable

importance, on this part of the subject, that till we descend to modern times, no objection was ever advanced against the authenticity of the verse in question. Jerome complains of the omission of it by unfaithful translators; and declares, that the best Greek manuscripts of his time contained it; for he appeals, as we have seen, in behalf of his version, to the authority of these manuscripts. Jerome died A.D. 420, and ever since his days, the verse has not only maintained its place in the Scriptures, but has been uniformly quoted and referred to, by writers of the first eminence for learning and integrity, in every succeeding age. If we should suppose for a moment, that it is spurious, is it not wonderful that this was never discovered till modern times? Is it not wonderful, that during the period of one thousand four hundred years, which intervened between the days of Praxeas and the age of Erasmus, not a single author can be mentioned who ever charged this verse with being an interpolation or forgery. Had it been, in any of those ages, even suspected to be spurious, would its adversaries, especially the Arians, have been merely silent when it was produced against them? Would they not have exclaimed aloud against those who quoted it? Would they not have filled the Christian world with invectives against them, for their falsehood and impiety, in thus attempting to corrupt the Word of God? That the Arians in those times never pretended to deny the authenticity of the verse in question, is a phenomenon which should be accounted for by those who contend that it is spurious” (Robert Jack, *Remarks on the Authenticity of 1 John v. 7*, <http://www.1john57.com/RJack.htm>).

- d. There are two popular myths regarding Erasmus and 1 John 5:7 that are parroted by modernists, evangelicals, and even fundamentalists today who defend the modern versions against the KJV: The first myth is that Erasmus promised to insert the verse if a Greek manuscript were produced. This is stated as follows by Bruce Metzger: “Erasmus promised that he would insert the *Comma Johanneum*, as it is called, in future editions if a single Greek manuscript could be found that contained the passage. At length such a copy was found--or made to order” (Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1st and 2nd editions). The second myth is that Erasmus challenged Edward Lee to find a Greek manuscript that included 1 John 5:7. This originated with Erika Rummel in 1986 in her book *Erasmus’ Annotations* and was repeated by James White in 1995 (*The Truth about the KJV-Only Controversy*).
- (1) In *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, Michael Maynard records that H.J. de Jonge, the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at Rijksuniversiteit (Leiden, Netherlands), has refuted both myths. de Jonge, a recognized specialist in Erasmian studies, refuted the myth of a promise in 1980, stating that Metzger’s view on Erasmus’ promise “has no foundation in Erasmus’ work. Consequently it is highly improbable that he included the difficult passage because he considered himself bound by any such promise.”
- (2) De Jonge has also refuted the new myth of a challenge (which Rummel devised

in reaction to the burial of the promise myth). In a letter of June 13, 1995, to Maynard, de Jonge wrote: “I have checked again Erasmus’ words quoted by Erika Rummel and her comments on them in her book *Erasmus’ Annotations*. This is what Erasmus writes [on] in his *Liber tertius quo respondet ... Ed. Lei*: Erasmus first records that Lee had reproached him with neglect of the MSS. of 1 John because Er. (according to Lee) had consulted only one MS. Erasmus replies that he had certainly not used only one ms., but many copies, first in England, then in Brabant, and finally at Basle. He cannot accept, therefore, Lee’s reproach of negligence and impiety. ‘Is it negligence and impiety, if I did not consult manuscripts which were simply not within my reach? I have at least assembled whatever I could assemble. Let Lee produce a Greek MS. which contains what my edition does not contain and let him show that that manuscript was within my reach. Only then can he reproach me with negligence in sacred matters.’ From this passage you can see that Erasmus does not challenge Lee to produce a manuscript etc. What Erasmus argues is that Lee may only reproach Erasmus with negligence of MSS if he demonstrates that Erasmus could have consulted any MS. in which the *Comma Johanneum* figured. Erasmus does not at all ask for a MS. containing the *Comma Johanneum*. He denies Lee the right to call him negligent and impious if the latter does not prove that Erasmus neglected a manuscript to which he had access. In short, Rummel’s interpretation is simply wrong. The passage she quotes has nothing to do with a challenge. Also, she cuts the quotation short, so that the real sense of the passage becomes unrecognizable. She is absolutely not justified in speaking of a challenge in this case or in the case of any other passage on the subject” (emphasis in original) (de Jonge, cited from Maynard, p. 383).

- (3) Jeffrey Khoo observes further: “Yale professor Roland Bainton, another Erasmian expert, agrees with de Jonge, furnishing proof from Erasmus’ own writing that Erasmus’ inclusion of 1 John 5:7f was not due to a so-called ‘promise’ but the fact that he believed ‘the verse was in the Vulgate and must therefore have been in the Greek text used by Jerome’” (Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, 2001, p. 88).
- (4) Edward F. Hills, who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, testifies: “... it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus, but the usage of the Latin speaking Church” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*).
- (5) In the 3rd edition of *The Text of the New Testament* Bruce Metzger corrected his false assertion about Erasmus as follows: “What is said on p. 101 above about Erasmus’ promise to include the *Comma Johanneum* if one Greek manuscript were found that contained it, and his subsequent suspicion that MS 61 was written expressly to force him to do so, needs to be corrected in the light of the



research of H. J. DeJonge, a specialist in Erasmian studies who finds no explicit evidence that supports this frequently made assertion” (Metzger, *The Text of The New Testament*, 3rd edition, p. 291, footnote 2).

- (6) The problem is that these myths continue to be paraded as truth by modern version defenders.

e. **CONCLUDING POINT: THERE IS A STRANGE HYPOCRISY TO THE CLAIM BY TEXTUAL CRITICS THAT 1 JOHN 5:7 HAS SLIGHT TEXTUAL AUTHORITY.** Whereas the Received Text does contain a few readings that have minority support in the Greek manuscripts (but are represented broadly in the Latin), the Critical Greek Text contains HUNDREDS of readings that have minority support in both the Greek and the Latin manuscripts! One of the principles of Westcott and Hort was this: “A few documents are not, by reason of their paucity, appreciably less likely to be right than a multitude opposed to them” (Introduction to the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament, 1881, p. 45).

- (1) The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament, the latest edition of the Westcott-Hort text, repeatedly questions and omits verses with far less textual authority than the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7. Most of the significant omissions are made on the authority of Aleph and B (sometimes both together; sometimes one standing alone), and a bare handful of similar manuscripts and versions.
- (2) For example, the word “fasting” is removed from Mark 9:29 in the Westcott-Hort text, the Nestles’ text, the UBS text, and all of the modern versions on the “authority” of its omission in Aleph, B, two minuscules (0274, 2427), one Old Latin, and the Georgian version.
- (3) The entire last 12 verses of the Gospel of Mark are omitted are seriously questioned on the “authority” of only three Greek manuscripts, Aleph, B, and the minuscule 304 (plus some slight witness by versions that were influenced by the Alexandrian Text).
- (4) The UBS text puts Matthew 21:44 in brackets on the “authority” of only one uncial (the terribly unreliable D), one minuscule, plus 7 Old Latin and one Syriac manuscripts. This is flimsy textual authority, to say the least.
- (5) Sometimes, in fact, the modern textual critics don’t have even this much “authority” for their changes. 104 times in the book of Matthew, the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek N.T. prints a reading that either is “found in no manuscript (34 times) or is found in only one Greek manuscript of the more than 5,300 existing” (Wilbur Pickering, *Some Relevant Considerations for New Testament Textual Criticism*, from his web site, <http://www.esgm.org/ingles/imenu.html>).

- f. Conclusion: I, for one, believe the apostle John wrote the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7-8 under divine inspiration. A recommended resource for further study is Michael Maynard, *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7-8: a tracing of the longevity of the Comma Johanneum, with evaluations of arguments against its authenticity* (Comma Publications, P.O. Box 1544, Douglas, AZ 85607, receptus@sprynet.com; a second edition is scheduled for publication sometime in late 2005).

#### JUDE 4

KJV: “For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord GOD, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

ASV: “... denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

RSV: “... deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

NASV: “... deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

NIV: “... deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

The omission of “God” from this passage removes a powerful and clear witness to Christ’s full deity. Clever heretics who deny that Jesus is fully God will admit that He is Master and Lord.

#### REVELATION 1:8, 11

KJV: “I am Alpha and Omega, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. ... Saying, I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.”

RSV: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ... saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

NASV: “I am the Alpha and Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. ... saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

NIV: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.’ ... which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.’”

CSV: “‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.’ ... saying, ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.’”

- a. In the critical Greek text “the beginning and the ending” is omitted from verse 8 and “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” is omitted from verse 11.
- b. As it stands in the Received Text and in the KJV and any other faithful TR translations, the “Almighty” of verse 8 is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ of verse 11, but this connection is broken by the omissions in the critical text.
- c. Modern version proponents like to point out that the critical text adds the word “God” in Rev. 1:8. But consider the whole picture: Verse 8 in the critical text omits “the beginning and the ending.” Verse 9 omits “Christ” two times. Verse 11 omits “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” The overall effect of the modern version rendering of Revelation chapter one is to weaken its testimony to Christ’s deity as compared with the Greek Received Text and faithful translations such as the King James Bible.

We have looked briefly at more than 30 important passages in which the testimony of Christ’s deity has been removed or weakened in the critical Greek New Testament and in the modern versions. There are many passages we did not include. While not every modern version contains all of these corruptions, every modern version based on the critical Greek text contains most of them. The doctrine that Jesus Christ is God is not entirely removed from these Bibles, but the overall testimony to Christ’s deity has been weakened. Is this really a matter of little consequence, as so many would have us believe?

In his book “The Truth about the King James Only Controversy,” James White makes the claim that the modern versions based on the critical Greek text are actually stronger in their witness to Christ’s deity than the Reformation Greek text and the Reformation translations. This is a new position that he has invented in his zeal to defend the modern versions against the KJV, but it is without basis in fact. The charts that he includes are selective in their witness and do not give the full story. Christians on both sides of this debate in former times understood the doctrinal issue associated with modern textual criticism. On one side the Unitarians and modernists understood that the critical Greek text supported their doctrine of Christ more than the Received Text, and this is why they put all of their support behind it. On the other side, the majority of Bible believing Christians in the 18th and 19th centuries knew that to make the aforementioned changes, taking “God” out of 1 Tim. 3:16 and removing 1 Jn. 5:7,8, for example, was an attack upon Christ’s deity. I have answered White at some length in “Examining James Whites’ ‘King James Only Controversy.’” This is available at the Way of Life web site in the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy database.

### THE OMISSION OF “LORD” AS APPLIED TO JESUS CHRIST

MATTHEW 13:51; 28:6; MARK 9:24; LUKE 9:57, 59; ROMANS 6:11; 1 CORINTHIANS 4:10; GALATIANS 6:17; 1 TIMOTHY 1:1; 5:21; 2 TIMOTHY 4:1; TITUS 1:4; 2 JOHN 3

In all of these verses “Lord” is removed, thus weakening the overall testimony of the New Testament to Christ’s deity.

### THE SEPARATION OF “JESUS” FROM “CHRIST”

MATTHEW 9:29; 12:25; 13:51; 14:14; 22:22, 25, 27; 15:30; 16:20; JOHN 6:14; ACTS 3:26; 9:29; 19:10; ROMANS 16:18; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18; COLOSSIANS 1:28; 1 PETER 5:10, 14

- a. These are just a few examples of more than 60 passages in which the name “Jesus” is omitted in association with the great works of Christ, or in which “Christ” is omitted in association with the name “Jesus.”
- b. “The separation of ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ’ occurs far too often to look for any cause other than deliberate editing in certain N.T. manuscripts. That there was a strong movement in the early centuries which could result in such a systematic editing, there can be no doubt! The foremost error regarding the Person of Christ, is of course, to deny His true Deity and true Humanity. The chief means by which this was done, and which finds expression down to our own day, is technically known as ‘Adoptionism’ or ‘Spirit Christology.’ Here, Jesus of Nazareth, an ordinary man of unusual virtue, was ‘adopted’ by God into divine Sonship by the advent of the ‘Christ-Spirit’ at His baptism. Therefore, Jesus became Christ at His baptism, rather than, the fact that He was always the Christ from eternity. And though united for a time, Jesus and Christ were separate personages. ... it is the small group of Alexandrian manuscripts which consistently disassociate ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ.’ And, along with Aleph and B, Papyri 46 follows the same trend. ... in 1 Cor. 15:47, it reveals its dark secret! ‘... the second man is THE SPIRIT from heaven’ (P46)” (Jack Moorman, *A Closer Look: Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version*, pp. 5, 6).

### THE CORRUPTION OF THREE GREAT TESTIMONIES TO CHRIST

By its omissions and changes, the critical text corrupts three of the greatest testimonies of Christ in the New Testament, that of the thief on the cross in Luke 23, of Peter in John 6, and of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8.

LUKE 23:42

KJV: “And he said unto Jesus, LORD, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”

ASV: “And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.”

RSV: “And he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’”

NASV: “And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!”

NIV: “Then he said: ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.’”

CSV: “Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!’”

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, have the penitent thief addressing Jesus Christ merely as “Jesus,” rather than as “Lord.”

JOHN 6:69

KJV: “And we believe and are sure that thou art THAT CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.”

ASV: “And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.”

RSV: “And we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

NASV: “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

NIV: “We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

CSV: “We have come to believe and know that You are the Holy One of God!”

The critical Greek text changes “that Christ, the Son of the living God” to “the holy one of God,” thus corrupting this powerful witness to the fact that Jesus is the very Christ. One of the ways that false teachers have corrupted the doctrine of Jesus’ deity was to distinguish between “the Christ” and “Jesus,” alleging that though Christ is God, Jesus was not the same as Christ. Adoptionists, for example, claimed that “the Christ” came upon Jesus at his baptism and left him at the crucifixion. As it stands in the Traditional text, this heresy is plainly refuted, but the weak replacement in the Alexandrian text is almost meaningless. The only place in the Traditional text where Jesus is called “the holy one of God” is in Mk. 1:24 and Lk. 4:34, where demons are speaking.

ACTS 8:37

KJV: “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.”

ASV: Verse in italic

RSV: Verse omitted

NASV: Verse bracketed with footnote “Early mss do not contain this v.”

NIV: Verse omitted

CSV: Verse bracketed

- a. The modern versions omit or seriously question this verse and thereby remove the glorious and important testimony of the Ethiopian eunuch as to the incarnation and deity of Jesus Christ. “And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
- b. While it is true that this verse is absent from the majority of Greek manuscripts, “it is present in some of them, including *E* (6th or 7th century). It is cited by Irenaeus (c. 180) and Cyprian (c. 250) and is found in the Old Latin and the Vulgate” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition. p. 201).

The Alexandrian text thus weakens or removes three of the Bible’s most powerful testimonies to Christ’s deity, that of the thief on the cross (by the omission of “Lord”), that of Peter in John 6:69 (by changing “that Christ, the Son of the living God” to “the holy one of God”), and by omitting the Eunuch’s testimony in Acts 8:37.

## **THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

### MATTHEW 1:25

Here “firstborn son” is changed to “a son” in the modern versions. This plays into the hands of the Roman Catholic Church, which claims that Mary did not have any children other than Jesus.

### LUKE 2:22

Here “HER purification” is changed to “THEIR purification.” This strikes at the virgin birth and the sinlessness of Christ, for it implies that Jesus needed purification as well as Mary. The Greek manuscript support for “her purification” is weak, but as with Acts 8:37 and the Trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7, the true text is preserved in the Latin. “The reading *her purification* has a great deal of textual support among the Latin witnesses. The majority of all Latin manuscripts read, *et postquam postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis eius secundum legem mosi* (And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses). The Latin word *eius* (or *ejus*) means her and stands in the feminine genitive singular, thus of her. In order to have the translation of them, the Latin texts would have to use the word *eorum*. When we consider the age and the number of extant Latin manuscripts, we find the reading is both ancient and well substantiated” (Thomas Holland, *Crowned with Glory*, 2000).

### LUKE 2:33, 43

KJV: “And JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. ... And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER knew not of

it.”

ASV: “And his father and his mother ... his parents knew it not.”

RSV: “And his father and his mother ... His parents did not know it.”

NASV: “And His father and mother ... His parents were unaware of it.”

NIV: “The child’s father and mother ... they were unaware of it.”

CSV: “His father and mother ... His parents did not know it.”

- a. By changing “Joseph” to “the child’s father” and “his parents,” the NIV and other modern versions weaken the testimony of Christ’s virgin birth, compared with the KJV and the Greek Received Text. While it is true that the NIV elsewhere says that Christ was virgin born (Mt. 1:18-20), the KJV backs up that testimony with the added witness of Lk. 2:33 and 43, whereas the NIV does not. Those who understand the duplicity and cleverness of false teachers understand the importance of each and every one of these biblical testimonies.
- b. In Luke 2:33, the possessive pronoun is connected to Mary alone (*he meter autou*) and does not include Joseph.
- c. It is true that Luke 2:41 reads “his parents” in the KJV, but the fact remains that the NIV weakens the overall testimony of this passage by the changes.
- d. When Mary calls Joseph Jesus’ father in verse 48, Jesus replies, “... wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” “Why did not Jesus use ‘God,’ or ‘the Lord,’ but ‘Father’ at this juncture? I believe it is to correct any misconception that Joseph was in any way His father. God alone was His Father” (Jeffrey Khoo, *Kept Pure in All Ages*, p. 92).

#### GALATIANS 4:4 and HEBREWS 2:16

##### Galatians 4:4

KJV: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, MADE OF A WOMAN, made under the law.” “

ASV: “but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”

RSV: “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”

NASV: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

NIV: “But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

CSV: “But when the completion of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.”

Hebrews 2:16

KJV: “For verily HE TOOK NOT ON HIM THE NATURE OF ANGELS; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

ASV: “For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham.”

RSV: “For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham.”

NASV: “For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.”

NIV: “For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

CSV: “For it is clear that He does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham’s offspring.”

- a. Some who deny the virgin birth claim that the Apostles did not refer to this doctrine in their epistles to the churches (as if the clear statements in the Prophets and the Gospels are not sufficient). This claim is wrong. The virgin birth is referred to in Galatians 4:4 and Hebrews 2:16. Galatians says Christ was “made of a woman.” This unusual manner of speech is a reference to the virgin birth, as Christ was made of a woman without the assistance of a man. Hebrews says, “... he took on him the seed of Abraham.” This unusual manner of speech describes the preexistent Son of God taking upon Himself the seed of Abraham through the womb of the virgin Mary. Thus He could be both the Son of God and the son of Man and yet not inherit sin from Adam.
- b. But the changes made in these passages in the modern versions remove the possibility of a reference to the virgin birth.

(1) In Galatians 4:4 “made of a woman” is changed to “born of a woman” in the ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, and other modern versions. To be born of a woman is natural; to be made of a woman without the assistance of a man is supernatural and points to the virgin birth. This is not a textual issue but a translational one. The Greek word (*ginomai*) is the same in all texts and means “to cause to be” (‘gen’-erate), i.e. (reflexively) to become” (Strong’s). Thus “made” and not “born” is the proper translation. It is used 636 times in the N.T. (and 11 times in Galatians) but is never translated “born” in the KJV. The Greek word for *born* is a different word (*gennao*) and it is used in Gal. 4:23 and 4:29. The word for “born again” is *anagennao* (1 Pet. 1:23).

(2) In Hebrews 2:16 “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” is changed to “For surely it is not angels he helps,



but Abraham's descendants" in the NIV. The ASV, RSV, NASV, and other modern versions have something similar. Thus, according to the modern versions, Jesus merely helped the Jews, whereas according to the KJV, the preexistent Christ incarnated Himself through the womb of the virgin and became a Jew. This is not a textual issue but a translational one. The critical Greek text reads the same here as the Received Text. The context plainly supports the King James Bible's translation of Hebrews 2:16. Verses 14-18 describe Christ's incarnation, whereby he took part of flesh and blood, and demonstrate that by the incarnation He destroyed the works of the devil and became a merciful and faithful high priest to the saints.

## **THE BLOOD ATONEMENT OF CHRIST IS WEAKENED**

### **COLOSSIANS 1:14**

KJV: "In whom we have redemption THROUGH HIS BLOOD, even the forgiveness of sins:"

ASV: "in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins:"

RSV: "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

NASV: "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

NIV: "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

CSV: "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

The modern versions omit the all-important phrase "through his blood."

### **HEBREWS 1:3**

KJV; "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had BY HIMSELF purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"

ASV: "... when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

RSV: "... When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

NASV: "... When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

NIV: "... After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

CSV: "... After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

The modern versions omit the words "by himself" from this verse, thus weakening the testimony of Scripture as to the completion of the atonement. It removes from Scripture a

powerful testimony that single-handedly refutes heresies such as Romanism, with its doctrine that the sacrifice of Christ must be perpetuated in the mass.

#### 1 PETER 4:1

KJV: “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered FOR US in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.”

ASV: “Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;”

RSV: “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same thought, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,”

NASV: “Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, became he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin.”

NIV: “Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.”

CSV: “Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same resolve—because the One who suffered in the flesh has finished with sin.”

The modern versions omit “for us” and thus remove the precious doctrine of the substitutionary atonement from this verse. Of course, this is a doctrine that has been under tremendous attack in the past 150 years. The footnote in the Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSV) says, “In the flesh probably means ‘in human existence,’” thus supporting the false doctrine that Christ’s atonement was purchased by His life more than by His blood and death.

#### 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7

KJV: “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed FOR US:”

ASV: “... For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ:”

RSV: “... For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.”

NASV: “... For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”

NIV: “... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

CSV: “... For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.”

The modern versions omit “for us” in this verse, as well.

### **THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION IS WEAKENED**

Following are five New Testament passages on biblical separation compared in the King James Bible and the New International Version. The NIV weakens or destroys the testimony of each passage. Since separation is one of the most important means of

protecting the churches from error, this is a serious issue. The NIV is the preferred Bible of New Evangelicalism, and it is not surprising that it strengthens the New Evangelical tendency to ignore separation.

### ROMANS 16:17-18

KJV: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

NIV: “I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people.”

The NIV turns this passage on its head by making it appear that anyone who causes division should be rejected. In fact, the KJV translation is correct in that it is only *a certain kind* of division that is wrong, that is, division based on false doctrine. As the NIV stands in this passage, the danger does not appear to be false doctrine but divisiveness itself, regardless of the cause of the division. This, of course, fits the contemporary ecumenical philosophy, but the Bible tells us that the truth itself causes divisions. In fact, the truth demands divisions! The Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to bring division to the earth (Lk. 12:51).

### 2 THESSALONIANS 3:6

KJV: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.”

NIV: “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers, to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to the teaching you received from us.”

The NIV severely weakens this passage by paraphrasing the Greek words *peripateo ataktos* (correctly translated by the KJV as “walks disorderly”) as “who is idle.” This limits the passage to only one certain type of disobedience. While the passage would apply to one who is idle and refuses to work, that is only one application. The Greek and the King James Bible’s accurate English translation thereof allows for a much broader application. Correctly translated, the verse teaches that a professing Christian who openly disobeys the plain teaching of the Epistles is to be avoided. Many fundamentalists have applied this to New Evangelicals who brazenly reject the Bible’s commands of separation, and rightfully so; but the NIV paraphrase does not allow for this. “Unfortunately, English translations like the NIV have paraphrased the Greek in rendering the passage. This obscures the principle and limits the passage to only one application of the principle, namely--the problem of

loafers. ... Since both of these non-specific phrases are found in the very first verse of the paragraph in which Paul proceeds to address the issue of errant non-working brethren, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that he deliberately chose to begin his instruction by stating a general principle, before dealing specifically with the problem itself. This pattern can be demonstrated in many other Pauline passages (Rom. 13:1, 6, 1 Cor. 6:12, 13-20; Gal. 5:1ff). The whole of v. 6 is therefore a general principle, that believers ought to separate themselves from every one in their midst who was deliberately disobeying any part of the whole body of inspired instruction. Thus, the main issue this paragraph addresses is disobedience” (Charles Seet, “The Principle of Secondary Separation,” *The Burning Bush*, 1996, 2, pp. 41-42).

### 1 TIMOTHY 6:3-5

KJV: “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: FROM SUCH WITHDRAW THYSELF.”

NIV: “If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.”

With the omission of the phrase “from such withdraw thyself” the doctrine of separation is removed entirely from this important passage.

### 2 TIMOTHY 2:15-18

KJV: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But SHUN PROFANE AND VAIN BABBLINGS: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

NIV: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. AVOID GODLESS CHATTER, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the

resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.”

The NIV translation “godless chatter” is another example of paraphrasing which weakens a passage. The KJV, on the other hand, carefully and precisely translates the Greek words *bebelos* (profane) *kenophonia* (vain babblings). The English word “profane” is a good translation of *bebelos*, but godless is not, because “profane” allows for the full meaning of the Greek word *bebelos*, whereas “godless” refers to only one possible aspect of its meaning. *Bebelos* refers to a wide variety of errors, including Jewish and pagan fables, anything, in fact, that is contrary to God’s Word. Further, the NIV completely ignores the Greek word *keno*, meaning vain or empty. Thus the NIV paraphrase severely reduces the application of this verse and renders it largely impotent in the battle for separation from end-time apostasy. The KJV translation, on the other hand, carefully follows the Greek and teaches us that *any* babbling or teaching that is either profane *or* vain is to be shunned.

#### TITUS 3:10-11

KJV: “A man that is AN HERETIC after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”

NIV: “Warn A DIVISIVE PERSON once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”

The NIV destroys the meaning of this passage and renders it ineffective by mistranslating the word “heretic.” The King James Bible, on the other hand, simply transliterates the Greek word *hairetokos*, which is from the root word *hairetizo*, meaning “to choose.” A heretic in the biblical sense is not merely a divisive person. A person can be divisive and not be a heretic, because division can be caused by truth as well as by error. The Lord Jesus Christ caused division (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19) and even said that this was one of the purposes of His coming (Lk. 12:51). Likewise, the Apostle Paul caused many divisions. He sought to divide the churches in Galatia from the false teachers there, for example. Diotrephes doubtless charged the Apostle John with divisiveness when John wrote to one of Diotrephes’ church members and criticized the proud church leader’s self-willed ways (3 John 9-11). The number of proud Diotrephes-type false teachers increased rapidly after the death of the Apostles, and within a few hundred years the false teachers outnumbered sound teachers and began to persecute them, and the real heretics, those who had departed from the New Testament faith, began to label apostolic Christians the heretics! Thus from about 500 A.D. even to this day, there have been more unscriptural churches than sound Bible ones and the unscriptural churches have branded sound churches as false and have charged them with heresy and division from the “Catholic” church. The NIV translation of Titus 3:10-11 gives support to the false churches in their rush to label any division as sinful. The NIV translation, though, is wrong. The heretic of Titus 3 is more than merely

someone who causes division. A heretic causes division, but it is division on the basis of his self-willed choice of error and his refusal to submit to the apostolic faith. The NIV mistranslation turns this passage on its head. Instead of calling for separation from true heretics, it calls for separation from anyone causing division for any reason. By mistranslating the passage, the NIV actually calls for separation from separatist Bible believers rather than separation from true heretics, thus supporting the ecumenical New Evangelical philosophy.

## **DOCTRINE WEAKENED THROUGH THE REMOVAL OF DIVINE REPETITION**

- a. Consider what the Bible teaches about the significance of repetition in Scripture.
  - (1) In Genesis 41:32 Joseph explains that the reason why God showed the vision to Pharaoh twice was “because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” The repetition emphasized the certainty of the thing.
  - (2) We see the same thing in Peter’s vision in Acts 10. The vision was repeated three times (v. 16) to emphasize its importance and to enforce its teaching upon Peter’s mind and heart.
  - (3) This is why there is so much repetition in many parts of the Bible, such as the continual repetition of “they shall know that I am the Lord” in Ezekiel.
  - (4) This is why Jesus often said “verily, verily” rather than “verily.”
- b. Consider some examples of how repetition is removed in the modern versions:
  - (1) The omission of “to repentance” in Mat. 9:13 and Mk. 2:17

### MATTHEW 9:13

KJV: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners TO REPENTANCE.”

ASV: “But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

### MARK 2:17

KJV: “When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners TO REPENTANCE.”

ASV: “And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no

need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

In these passages the words “to repentance” are omitted in the critical Greek text and in the modern versions. Though the words “to repentance” are left in the critical text in Lk. 5:32, the two omissions weaken the doctrine overall because the emphasis is removed. The Greek Received Text and the King James Bible repeat this important statement (“I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”) three separate times in the Gospels.

(2) The omission of “by every word of God” in Luke 4:4

KJV: “And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but BY EVERY WORD OF GOD.”

NIV: “Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man does not live on bread alone.’”

Though this verse is repeated in Matt. 4:4 and there the critical text does not remove the part about the words of God, the fact remains that half of the New Testament witness to this important truth is omitted in the modern versions.

(3) The omission of Mark 9:44 and 46

According to the Greek Received Text, Christ repeats the following statement three times in His sermon in Mark 9, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48). But the critical text and the modern versions remove two of those references, in verses 44 and 46. By removing this repetition, the power and impact of this sermon is weakened.

We have demonstrated that the allegation that the Bible version issue is not doctrinal **IGNORES THE FACT THAT KEY DOCTRINES ARE WEAKENED BY THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS.**

**9. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT SOME DOCTRINE IS ACTUALLY REMOVED FROM THE CRITICAL TEXT AND THE MODERN VERSIONS.***

Let’s consider **the doctrine of fasting**. Though the word “fasting” is not removed entirely from the modern versions, the crucial doctrine that fasting is a part of spiritual warfare is removed. For example, the modern versions retain “fasting” in Acts 13:2-3 and 14:23; but with the omission of Matthew 17:21 and the corruption of Mark 9:29 the reason for the fasting is never clearly stated.

### MATTHEW 17:21

KJV: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

This entire verse is omitted in most of the modern versions, including the ASV, NASV, New English Bible, Jerusalem Bible, Twentieth Century, and Phillips. The RSV puts the verse in italics and the TEV puts it in brackets. The Holman Christian Standard Version also brackets the verse, thus casting doubt upon its apostolic authenticity.

In this context the Lord Jesus was referring to overcoming demonic strongholds (see Mat. 17:14-21), and He taught that to overcome in spiritual warfare one must practice three things: *faith* (Mat. 17:20) and *prayer* and *fasting* (Mat. 17:21), not faith alone and not prayer alone and not fasting alone, but a combination of faith *and* prayer *and* fasting. This important lesson is removed from the modern versions by the omission or serious questioning of the verse.

### MARK 9:29

KJV: "And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer AND FASTING."

ASV: "And he said unto them, This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer."

RSV: "And he said to them, 'This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.'"

NASV: "And He said to them, 'This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.'"

NIV: "He replied, 'This kind can come out only by prayer.'"

CSV: "And He told them, 'This kind can come out by nothing but prayer [and fasting].'"

The critical Greek text and the modern versions based on this text omit or seriously question "fasting." Mark 9:29 is a companion verse to Matthew 17:21. These are the key passages where fasting is shown to be an essential part of spiritual warfare, but both are changed in the modern versions in such a manner that the teaching is removed.

### ACTS 10:30

KJV: "And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was FASTING until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,"

ASV: "And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,"

RSV: "And Cornelius said, 'Four days ago, about this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel,'"

NASV: "Cornelius said, 'Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments.'"

NIV: "Cornelius answered: 'Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at



three in the afternoon...”

CSV: “Cornelius replied, ‘Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe stood before me.’”

Cornelius’ testimony that he was praying *and fasting* is removed from the Bible by the omission of the word “fasting” from this verse.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 7:5

KJV: “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to FASTING AND prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”

ASV: “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency.”

RSV: “Do not refuse one another except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control.”

NASV: “Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

NIV: “Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

CSV: “Do not deprive one another—except when you agree, for a time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

The omission of fasting from this verse in the critical Greek text and the modern versions weakens the overall doctrine of fasting as an important part of the Christian life.

### 2 CORINTHIANS 6:5

KJV: “In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,”

RSV: “beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger,”

NASV: “in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,”

TEV: “We have been beaten, imprisoned, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food.”

NIV: “in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger,”

CSV: “by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger.”

The modern versions have changed “fasting” to “hunger.” Yet hunger and fasting are two different things, as we see in the next example (2 Cor. 11:27). In the Greek Received Text the word translated “fasting” in 2 Cor. 6:5 in the KJV is “nesteia,” which is always translated “fasting” in the KJV. It appears in Mat. 17:21; Mk. 9:29; Acts 14:23; 27:9; 1 Cor. 7:5; 2 Cor. 6:5 and 11:27. The critical Greek New Testament has the same Greek word, but for some reason the modern versions refuse to translate it.

## 2 CORINTHIANS 11:27

KJV: “In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”

RSV: “in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

NASV: “I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

TEV: “There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food.”

NIV: “I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.”

CSV: “labor and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.”

Most of the modern versions replace “fastings often” with “often without food.” This not only removes another witness to the importance of fasting in the Christian life and ministry, it creates a meaningless repetition and has Paul saying that he was “in hunger and thirst, often without food,” whereas to be in hunger and thirst obviously means that he was without food.

In the Greek Received Text underlying the KJV, there is both the word for hunger (*limos*) and the word for fasting (*nesteia*). The word “limos” means a scarcity of food and is always translated “dearth,” “famine,” or “hunger.” It appears 12 times in the Greek Received Text (Mat. 24:7; Mk. 13:8; Lk. 4:25; 15:14, 17; 21:11; Acts 7:11; 11:28; Rom. 8:35; 2 Cor. 11:27; Rev. 6:8; 18:8). Seven times it is translated “famine”; three times, “hunger”; and twice, “dearth.” The word “nesteia” appears seven times in the TR and is always translated “fasting.” Though the critical Greek New Testament also has the Greek word “nesteia,” for some reason the modern versions refuse to translate it properly.

**10. The allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *IGNORES THE FACT THAT THE CHANGES IN THE MODERN VERSIONS CREATE ERRORS IN THE BIBLE, AND THIS IS CERTAINLY A DOCTRINAL ISSUE.***

Not only do the modern versions weaken important doctrines, they also contain gross error, thus

undermining the Bible's authority. Psalm 12:6 says, "*The words of the Lord are PURE words,*" but the new versions are not pure. 1 Peter 1:23 says the word of God is "incorruptible." In contrast to this, consider the following examples of the errors in modern versions:

#### MATTHEW 5:22

KJV: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother WITHOUT A CAUSE shall be in danger of the judgment ..."

ASV: "but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment ..."

RSV: "But I say to you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment ..."

NASV: "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court ..."

NIV: "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ..."

CSV: "But I tell you, everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. ..."

The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, omit the words "without a cause." This omission creates a serious error, because the Lord Jesus Himself was angry at times. Mark 3:5 says, "And when he had looked round about on them WITH ANGER..." To be angry is not always a sin, but to be angry "without a cause" is. The Lord Jesus was angry for the sake of righteousness and truth. The modern version omission in this verse makes Jesus Christ subject to judgment.

#### MATTHEW 27:34

KJV: "They gave him VINEGAR to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink."

ASV: "they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall..."

RSV: "they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall..."

NASV: "they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall..."

NIV: "There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall..."

CSV: "they gave Him wine mixed with gall to drink..."

a. The modern versions replace "vinegar" with "wine." This creates a contradiction with the prophecy in Ps. 69:21, which says Christ was given vinegar to drink.

b. The Greek word translated "vinegar" in the KJV is "oxos," which appears six times in the New Testament, always in the context of Christ's crucifixion, and always translated *vinegar*. The Greek word for *wine* is *oinos*," a different word. The critical Greek text, following some corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts, replaces *oxos* with *oinos*.

### MARK 1:2-3

KJV: “As it is written in THE PROPHETS, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”

ASV: “Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

RSV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

NASV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

NIV: “It is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

CSV: “As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...”

The KJV says Mark is quoting the “prophets” plural, but the modern versions say he is quoting “Isaiah the prophet.” This creates an error, because it is plain that Mark was not quoting Isaiah only but was quoting Malachi 1:3 *as well as* Isaiah 40:3.

### LUKE 4:44

KJV: “And he preached in the synagogues of GALILEE.”

RSV: “And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.”

NASV: “So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.”

NIV: “And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.”

In this verse, “Galilee” is changed to “Judea” in the RSV, NASV, NIV and many other modern versions; and yet we know from a comparison to Mark 1:35-39, a companion passage, that Christ was not preaching in Judea at this time.

### JOHN 7:8

KJV: “Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up YET unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.”

ASV: “... I go not up unto this feast...”

NASV: “... I go not up to this feast...”

RSV: “... I am not going up to this feast...”

NIV: “... I am not yet going up to this Feast because for me the right time has not yet come.” [Footnote: “Some early manuscripts do not have yet.”]

By removing the word “yet,” many modern versions have Jesus speaking a lie, because in verse 10 we see plainly that Jesus did go to the very feast later.

### ACTS 9:31

KJV: “Then had THE CHURCHES rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified...”

ASV: “So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace...”

RSV: “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace...”

NASV: “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace...”

NIV: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace...”

CSV: “So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace...”

By changing the word “churches” to “church,” the modern texts and versions legitimize the heresy of ecclesiastical territorialism and hierarchicalism, of one church or ecclesiastical leader ruling over an entire region (or the entire world in the case of Roman Catholicism). In the Greek Received Text and in the King James Bible, the word “church” is used very precisely, and every time that it refers to the churches in a region it is used in the plural -- the churchES of Galatia (1 Cor. 16:1), the churchES of Asia (1 Cor. 16:19), the churchES of Macedonia (2 Cor. 8:1), the churchES of Judaea (Gal. 1:22).

## **CONCLUSION TO THIS SECTION ON THE DOCTRINAL ISSUE PERTAINING TO THE MODERN VERSIONS**

1. There is a serious doctrinal issue pertaining to the texts and versions, and we must be careful not to accept commonly held myths.
2. Both the heretics and the Bible believers in the 19th century understood that there is a serious theological issue at stake with the competing texts.
3. While we can thank the Lord that sound doctrine in general can be taught from most texts and versions in spite of their differences, this does not mean that one version is as theologically sound as another or that the theological issue at stake is not serious.
4. We must remember the principle of the sword.
  - a. The Bible is likened to a sword (Heb. 4:12) and it is said to be a part of our spiritual weaponry against the devil (Eph. 6:17).
  - b. To be effective, a sword must be sharp. While any Bible text or translation, even a Roman Catholic one, contains the doctrine of the Christian faith in a general sense, this does not mean that any one text or version is as effective and sharp as another. Who would think highly of a soldier who does not care if his sword is sharp just so long as he has a sword? I am convinced that the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text underlying the King James Bible is the very sharpest Sword and when this is translated properly into another language it becomes a sharp Sword in that language. I am convinced that in English the sharpest Sword is the King James Bible. To say that a text that omits more than 200 verses and significant portions of verses and thousands of other words in the New Testament alone is as effective as

one that has all of these words is ridiculous.

- c. This is not a light matter. A battle is raging. There are spiritual enemies in high places. Truth is being cast to the ground. It is difficult enough to win the battle when we have the sharpest sword and the most complete armor. And yet it appears that we have come upon an entire generation of Christians who are slashing away at their spiritual enemies with dull swords, and if a bystander tries to warn them of the folly of this, they rail upon him and charge him with being divisive and mean-spirited!
- d. Is it any wonder that though Bibles and churches and Bible teaching are multiplied today beyond anything former times could have imagined, that there is less spiritual power and discernment than ever?

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART IV. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS SUPERIOR DOCTRINE**

1. According to Norman Geisler, the textual variants are “----- inconsequential.”
2. According to James White, no matter what translation you use, “truth remains ---- all the ----.”
3. What percentage of the New Testament is affected by textual variants between the critical Greek text and the Reformation Greek text?
4. According to the research of Jack Moorman, how many words are omitted from the critical Greek text that are found in the Received Greek text?
5. These omissions equal the omission of what two books from the New Testament?
6. How many entire verses are omitted or questioned in the critical Greek text?
7. How many partial verses are omitted in the critical Greek text?
8. How is the allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue a position that is contradictory and duplicitous?
9. What are three terms that Bruce Metzger uses to describe the Received Text underlying the King James Bible?
10. How is the allegation that the Bible version issue is not a doctrinal issue *a dangerous half-truth*?
11. What is the real heart of the issue that the modern version defenders fail to address?
12. In Luke 2:14, there is only one letter difference between the Received Text and the Critical Text, yet this results in the difference between “peace, good will toward men” and “peace to men on whom his favor rests.” What is the significance of this difference?
13. What warning did the writer of Proverbs give in Prov. 30:5-6?
14. What warning is given in Revelation 22:18-19?
15. Why does modern textual criticism lead to skepticism?
15. Dr. Edward F. Hills warned, “...the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to ----- ----, to a ----- view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith.”
16. What two groups of Christians in the 19th century recognized that the Bible text-version issue is a doctrinal issue?

17. Joseph Philpot warned against revising the King James Bible and said that if a notice were set up, "the Old Bible to be mended," plenty of workmen would "pull the pages to pieces." What sort of workman was he referring to?
18. Robert Dabney examined the Bible texts that were changed through modern textual criticism and he observed, "If now the reader will glance back upon this latter list of variations, he will find that in every case, the ----- effect of the departure from the Received Text is to ----- or - ----- some testimony for the ----- of the Saviour."
19. John Burgon observed that since it was the doctrine of the eternal Godhead of Jesus Christ that was under attack in the first centuries after the apostles, it is "a memorable circumstance that it is ----- those ---- texts ... which have suffered most severely, and retain to this hour traces of having been in various ways ----- with."
20. Who were two Unitarian textual critics who understood that the changes in the modern critical Greek text lent support to their heresy pertaining to Jesus Christ and weakened orthodox doctrine?
21. How is the doctrine of the Gospel of Mark changed with the removal of the last 12 verses?
22. How is the doctrine of baptism changed with the omission of Acts 8:37?
23. How is the doctrine of separation changed with the omission of "from such withdraw thyself" in 1 Timothy 6:5?
24. When the Lord Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "why callest thou me good?" in the Received Greek Text, what did He mean?
25. If the Gospel of Mark ends at 16:8, as it does in the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, how does this affect the doctrine of Christ?
26. Why is it wrong to change "only begotten Son" to "only Son" or "one and only Son"?
27. Why did Gnostics change "only begotten Son" to "only begotten God" in John 1:18?
28. When asked for examples of how the modern versions weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity, be ready to provide the following ten and to show how each verse is changed in the modern versions: John 1:27; 3:13; 8:59; Acts 20:28; Romans 14:10; 1 Cor. 15:47; Eph. 3:9; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:3; 5:7.
29. The modern versions change "the church of God" to "the church of the Lord" in Acts 20:28. How does this affect the doctrine of Christ's deity?
30. The modern versions change "judgment seat of Christ" to "judgment seat of God" in Romans 14:10. How does this affect the doctrine of Christ's deity?
31. The modern versions remove "God" from 1 Timothy 3:16; how does this destroy the "mystery"?
32. What percentage of the Greek manuscripts have "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16?
33. The modern versions change "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" to "confesseth not Jesus" in 1 John 4:3. How does this weaken the doctrine of the deity of Christ?
34. 1 John 5:7 is removed from most modern Bible versions, but it was included in most versions prior to the 20th century. When did 1 John 5:7 first appear in the English Bible?
35. If someone were going to add a Trinitarian statement to a Greek manuscript to give support to this doctrine against heretics, why would he not use the formula "Father, Word, and Holy Spirit"?
36. Why would heretics want to remove 1 John 5:7 from the Bible?

37. Why did heretics want to separate Jesus from Christ?
38. What three great New Testament testimonies to Christ's deity are corrupted in the modern versions?
39. The modern versions change "her purification" to "their purification" in Luke 2:22. How does this weaken the doctrine of the virgin birth?
40. How does Galatians 4:4 refer to the virgin birth as it stands in the King James Bible?
41. What change do the modern versions make in Galatians 4:4?
42. What important phrase is omitted from Colossians 1:14 in the modern versions?
43. What two words are omitted from Hebrews 1:3 in the modern versions?
44. What two words are omitted from 1 Cor. 5:7 and 1 Peter 4:1 in the modern versions?
45. How does the New International Version mistranslate the term "heretic" in Titus 3:10?
46. What is the purpose of repetition in the Bible and where in the book of Genesis do we see this taught?
47. In what chapter of Mark's Gospel do the modern versions omit two entire verses about hell?
48. Is the word fasting entirely removed from the modern versions?
49. In what way is the doctrine of fasting attacked in the modern versions?
50. What important verse about fasting is omitted in the modern versions?
51. Is hunger the same as fasting?
52. List five errors that are in the modern versions.
53. The modern versions remove "without a cause" from Matthew 5:22. How does this make Jesus a sinner?
54. Why is it wrong to change "vinegar" to "wine" in Matthew 27:34?
55. In John 7:8, the modern versions omit the word "yet." How does this make Jesus into a liar?



## **V. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS UNMATCHED HERITAGE (from the Wycliffe of 1384 to the KJV of 1611)**

The King James Bible is not merely *another* translation. Its heritage and the manner in which it was created are unique in the history of Bible translation. The following overview traces this heritage, beginning with the Wycliffe Bible of the 14th century.

### **Section Summary**

1. English Scriptures prior to the Wycliffe Bible.
2. The Wycliffe Bible (1380, 1382)
3. The Tyndale New Testament (1526)
4. The Coverdale Bible (1535)
5. The Matthew's Bible (1537)
6. The Great Bible (1539)
7. The Geneva Bible 1557, 1560)
8. The Bishops Bible (1568)
9. The King James Bible (1611)

### **ENGLISH SCRIPTURES PRIOR TO THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE**

1. As far as we know, there was no entire New Testament in English prior to that of Wycliffe in 1380, only Scripture portions.
2. It is important to understand that our knowledge of the history of the Bible prior to the 15th century is meager. Very little has survived of the writings of separatist Bible believers from England's first 1,400 years because of Rome's domination of the country beginning in about the 6th century and because so much literature was destroyed during the persecution under the Roman emperors and by pagan invaders (Angels, Saxons, Jutes, Vikings, etc.).
  - a. Though outward conformity to Roman Catholicism was complete in England during this period, this does not mean there were no dissenters. It meant, rather, that the dissenters were driven underground and were forced to practice their faith in secret and at great risk. The Catholic Church was aligned with the British crown and all dissenters were branded both as heretics and traitors. Within this oppressive climate, it was impossible to maintain Bible-believing churches openly, but there were believers, including ancient Waldenses and Lollards and Anabaptists, who practiced their faith in secret.
  - b. While we know that there were apostolic churches in England from the earliest

centuries and that they possessed and used the Scriptures, we have very little information about these ancient Bibles because the record was largely destroyed.

3. The English language went through three distinct periods of transition.

a. **OLD ENGLISH** (450-1150)

- (1) This was the language of England for seven centuries, from about A.D. 450 to 1150.
- (2) Old English, while extremely difficult to understand today, has been carried over into modern English in many ways. “Aldred’s Anglo-Saxon word order of subject-verb-object (‘dog bites man’) is the basic modern English word order, unlike the subject-object-verb (‘dog man bites’) preferred by Latin or later German, for example. That Saxon order is a significant inheritance in English. Vocabulary, too, can be familiar: Aldred’s ‘Gode’ is the English ‘God’ and not the Latin *Deus* or French *Dieu*; his ‘word’ is ‘word’, not the Latin *verbum* or French *mot*; his ‘and’ is ‘and’, not the Latin or French *et*” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 22).
- (3) There was a strong French influence in England after the Anglo-Saxons were defeated at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 by William (the Conqueror), Duke of Normandy. From 1066 to 1204 England was a part of Normandy and Anglo-Saxon began to be replaced with French, which was the language of government and culture. The English-speaking population was almost entirely illiterate. “After 1066 there is no record of new attempts to translate the Bible into English for two and a half centuries. The Bible in England was in either Latin or, occasionally, parts of it in Norman French. ... There is even a hint of a whole Bible in Anglo-Norman French before 1360; but the manuscript vanished long ago. For not far short of three hundred years, Bible translating in Britain belongs to the story of French literature, not English” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 56).
- (4) Some of the extant Old English Scripture portions are as follows:

**CAEDMON’S PARAPHRASE (7TH CENTURY)**

- (a) As far as we know the first attempt to put Scripture into Anglo-Saxon was by Caedmon in about 650 AD.
- (b) Caedmon has been described as “the first Saxon poet.” A laborer for the Abby of Whitby, he paraphrased large portions of the Bible into poetry, beginning with the fall of the angels. He describes creation, the flood,

highlights of Israel's history, the life of Christ, and the preaching of the apostles.

- (c) "The people learned and sang these religious poems or paraphrases and for a time they were their soul source of Bible knowledge" (David L. Brown, *Early Building Blocks of the English Bible in the British Isles*).

### **ALDHELM AND GUTHLAC (EARLY 8TH CENTURY)**

- (a) These men translated the Psalms into Anglo-Saxon in about 700 AD.
- (b) Aldhelm was the Abbot of Malmesbury and Bishop of Sherborne. Guthlac was from Crowland, a village near Peterborough, England, and was "the first Saxon anchorite hermit."

### **BEDE'S GOSPEL OF JOHN (8TH CENTURY)**

- (a) Bede spent most of life in a monastery at Jerrow in Northumberland, on the River Tyne in northeastern England. He wrote commentaries on much of the Bible and a history of England titled the *Ecclesiastical History of Britain* (731 AD), which is still in print today. In his history, Bede said that he was delivered to the abbot of the monastery when he was seven years old "to be educated" and "from that time I have spent the whole of my life within that monastery, devoting all my pains to the study of the Scriptures, and amid the observance of monastic discipline and the daily charge of singing in the Church, it has been ever my delight to learn or teach or write."
- (b) At the end of his life, in 735 AD, it is thought that Bede translated the Gospel of John into Old English, though no copy has survived.

### **ALCUIN'S PENTATEUCH (EARLY 9TH CENTURY)**

- (a) Alcuin, the schoolmaster of York, translated the Pentateuch into Old English in the late 8th or early 9th century. He died in 804 AD.
- (b) "Guppy quotes a portion of a sermon written by Alcuin, which seems to indicate that the distribution of the Scriptures at this time must have been much more extensive than is generally supposed. The quote reads, 'The reading of the Scriptures is the knowledge of everlasting blessedness. In them man may contemplate himself as in some mirror, which sort of person he is. The reading cleanseth the reader's soul, for, when we pray, we speak to God, and when we read the Holy Books, God speaks to us' (*A Brief Sketch of the History of the Transmission of the Bible down to the Revised English Version of 1881-95*; by Henry Guppy; Manchester University, 1934; p. 10)" (David L. Brown, *Early Building Blocks of the English Bible in the British Isles*).

## **ALFRED THE GREAT (9TH CENTURY)**

- (a) Alfred the Great died in 901 AD and desired that his people would read the Scriptures. In his sermon “Pastoral Care,” he expresses the wish that “all the free-born youth of my people ... may persevere in learning ... until they can perfectly read the English Scriptures” (Henry Guppy, *A Brief Sketch of the Transmission of the Bible*, p. 10).
- (b) It is known that Alfred himself translated some portions of the Law of Moses into English and it is possible that he or his associates translated others. Alfred’s statement quoted above would make sense only if a significant portion of the Scriptures were then available in Old English or if Alfred knew that such were in progress. It is thought that Alfred was translating the Psalms when he died.

## **THE VESPASIAN PSALTER (9TH CENTURY)**

This 8th century Latin book of Psalms was glossed in the mid-9th century into Old English. A gloss is not a natural translation but is more a word-for-word interlinear that largely followed the Latin word order. “It might be regarded as providing a series of prompts for those Anglo-Saxon clergy whose Latin was perhaps less than perfect.” It resides today in the British Library.

## **THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS (10TH CENTURY)**

- (a) The Lindisfarne Gospels were written in Latin in the 8th century and glossed into Old English in the 10th. Today these Gospels reside in the British Library and are usually on display in the literary museum, the John Ritblat Gallery. I have visited this amazing Gallery many times and each time I learn new things.
- (b) The Lindisfarne Gospels get their name from the island Lindisfarne, which is off the northeast coast of England. This is where they were written. A monastic school was located there and it was said to have been a missionary center since its establishment by the Irish monk Aidan in 625 “at the request of Edwin, the powerful King of Northumbria.” The Gospel that was preached by these missionaries, sadly, appears to have been Rome’s sacramental one.
- (c) The Latin Lindisfarne Gospels, containing Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were completed sometime before 721 A.D. and were created in the context of Roman Catholic heresy. “It is more likely that it was finished to be part of the celebration of St. Cuthbert, the greatest of the northern saints, who had earlier been bishop of Lindisfarne and had been buried there. The exhumation and elevation of his remains happened in about 698. ... The book had a lively history. It went with the body of St. Cuthbert on its seven years of travels

over northern England, carried by the monks who had been driven out of Lindisfarne by the invading Vikings in 875” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 20).

- (d) The Lindisfarne Gospels also display an association with Romanism by their size, extravagant artistry, and ornate binding. The pages are large. The vellum and ink are of the highest quality. The letters are huge so that only a few words fit on a page; they are ornate in the extreme and done in a riot of colors. “No fewer than forty different pigments have been identified.” Each page is surrounded by large colorful artistic designs with amazing detail. It must have taken weeks to make just one page. The binding features gems and precious metals. Bible believers made copies of Scriptures to be used and preached and carried by missionaries; they were small, plain, and largely unornamented. Roman Catholics made copies of Scripture to be displayed during the mass, carried about in processions, and “venerated”; they were large, extravagant, and ornate.
- (e) Between 946 and 968 A.D., Aldred in Chester-le-Street added above the Latin a running translation into Old English in all four Gospels. The first verse of John reads, “On fruman waes word and thaet word waes mid Gode and Gode waes thaet word. Thaet waes fruman mid Gode,” meaning, “In beginning was word and that word was with God and God was that word. That was in beginning with God.” We can see from this sample that Old English is not entirely incomprehensible to modern English readers.
- (f) This manuscript was kept in a monastery and it is unlikely that any copies were made available to the common people. The Roman Catholic Church kept the Scriptures locked up away from the people for the most part.

### **GOSELS IN SAXON (10TH-11TH CENTURIES)**

“From the late 10th or early 11th centuries, there survive seven manuscripts containing a version of the four gospels in the West Saxon dialect. From the same period, there survive two composite vernacular versions of the first books of the Old Testament, referred to as the Old English Hexateuch and the Old English Heptateuch [by Aelfric] as one contains the first six books and the other the first seven. Parts of this work appear in several other manuscripts. Apart from Genesis, most of the books are heavily edited or paraphrased. It seems that by this time vernacular Bible texts, like married priests, were acceptable and even desirable in the Anglo-Saxon church” (Vernacular Bibles, <http://medievalwriting.50megs.com/word/vernacible2.htm>). It could also be that these ancient Scripture portions belonged to Christians who were not a part of the dominant Roman Catholic Church.

**b. MIDDLE ENGLISH (1150-1450)**

- (1) This was the language of England from about 1150 to 1450. “After about 1150 it merged fully with the Norman French brought by William the Conqueror’s invaders in 1066 to become a different, enriched, language, in modern times named ‘Middle English’” (Daniell, p. 22).
- (2) The first entire English Bible was made during this period by John Wycliffe and his associates in 1382.
- (3) Middle English incorporated some letters and many words that are not longer in use, but after the spelling and grammar of the Wycliffe Bible is modernized it is still largely understandable today. Consider the following passage (Colossians 2:13-15) first as it was written in the Wycliffe and secondly after the spelling has been modernized:

Wycliffe Later Version: “And whanne ye weren deed in giltis, and in the prepucie of your fleisch, he quickenyde togidere you with hym: foryiving to you alle giltis, doynge away that writing of decre that was ayens us, that was contrary to us; and he took away that from the mydill, pitching it on the cros; and he spuylide principatis and poweris, and led out tristili, opynli ouercominge hem in hym silf.”

Wycliffe modernized: “And when ye were dead in guilts and in the prepucy of your flesh, he quickened together you with him: forgiving to you all guilts, doing away that writing of decree that was against us, that was contrary to us; and he took away that from the middle, pitching it on the cross; and he spoiled principates and powers and led out trustily, openly overcoming them in himself.”

**c. MODERN ENGLISH (1450 to present)**

- (1) Modern English emerged about the middle of the 15th century.
- (2) The first Bible in modern English was the Tyndale New Testament of 1526. When the spelling is modernized, the Tyndale is not difficult to understand today, almost 500 years later, except for a few obsolete words.
- (3) It is the Tyndale Bible itself (83% of the Tyndale Bible was retained in the King James Bible) that has kept the English language from becoming too far removed from that of the 16th century. The vast influence the Bible has wielded among English-speaking people has meant that the English language has not gone in a direct line away from its 16th century incarnation but has gone more in

revolutions around the English Bible. Whereas the English of the 5th century was largely incomprehensible five centuries later and the English of the 10th century was again largely incomprehensible five centuries later, this is not true for the five centuries following the introduction of the Tyndale Bible. After the spelling is modernized, the Tyndale Bible is largely understandable to people (especially to Bible believing Christians) in the 21st century!

## **THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE (1380, 1382)**

The history of the English Bible properly begins with John Wycliffe (1324-1384).

1. As we have seen, the Scripture portions most commonly found among English people before Wycliffe were Anglo Saxon and French, and the few English translations were only of portions of Scripture.
2. Some modern scholars have tried to make the case that Wycliffe did not do any of the actual translation himself. Older historians did not question Wycliffe's role in the work, and we believe the evidence supports this view. That Wycliffe had helpers and that the original translation went through revisions no one doubts, but I do not accept the view that John Wycliffe was not involved in the actual translation.

## **Wycliffe's Times**

1. In Wycliffe's day Rome ruled England and Europe with an iron fist. By the 7th century, Rome had brought England under almost complete dominion. England was under subjugation to the Pope from then until the 16th century, roughly 900 years, a period that is called Britain's Dark Ages.
  - a. King John (who ruled from 1199-1216) tried to resist Pope Innocent III's authority in the early 13th century, but he was not successful.
    - (1) The Pope excommunicated John and issued a decree declaring that he was no longer the king and releasing the people of England from obeying him.
    - (2) The Pope ordered King Philip of France to organize an army and navy to overthrow John, which he began to do with great zeal, eager to conquer England for himself.
    - (3) The Pope also called for a crusade against John, promising the participants remission of sins and a share of the spoils of war.
    - (4) In the mean time, John submitted to the Pope, pledging complete allegiance to him in all things and resigning England and Ireland into the Pope's hands. The following is a quote from the oath that John signed on May 15, 1213: "I John, by the grace of God King of England and Lord of Ireland, in order to expiate my sins, from my own free will and the advice of my barons, give to

the Church of Rome, to Pope Innocent and his successors, the kingdom of England and all other prerogatives of my crown. I will hereafter hold them as the pope's vassal. I will be faithful to God, to the Church of Rome, to the Pope my master, and to his successors legitimately elected."

- b. The Roman Catholic authorities severely repressed the people and did not allow any form of religion other than Romanism. There was intense censorship of thought. Those who refused to follow Roman Catholicism were persecuted and killed or banished.
- c. The representatives of the Pope had great authority and held many of the highest secular offices in the land. "The higher dignitaries in both these classes of the clergy, by virtue of their great temporalities held in feudal tenure from the crown, were barons of the realm, and sat in parliament under the title of 'lords spiritual,' taking precedence in rank for a parliament, archbishops, bishops, and abbots already headed the list. ... By prescriptive right, derived from times when the superior intelligence of the clergy gave them some claim to the distinction, all the high offices of state, all paces of trust and honor about the court, were in the hands of the clergy. In 1371, the offices of Lord Chancellor, Lord Treasurer, Keeper and Clerk of the Privy Seal, Master of the Rolls, Master in Chancery, Chancellor and Chamberlain of the Exchequer, and a multitude of inferior offices, were all held by churchmen" (H.C. Conant, *The Popular History of the Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, revised edition, p. 11).
- d. The bishops, parish priests, and even the monks in the monasteries lived in great opulence through the accumulation of property, the ingathering of tithes and offerings, the saying of masses for the dead, and the sale of indulgences. "To the office of the prelates were attached immense landed estates, princely revenues and high civil, as well as ecclesiastical powers; the lower clergy, residing on livings among the people, were supported chiefly by tithes levied on their respective parishes. ... The wealth of the English monks at this period almost passes belief. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the endowment of monasteries was a mania in Christendom. Lands, buildings, precious stones, gold and silver, were lavished upon them with unsparing prodigality. Rich men, disgusted with the world, or conscience-stricken for their sins, not unfrequently entered the cloister and made over to it their whole property. During the crusading epidemic, many mortgaged their estates to the religious houses for ready money, who never returned, or were too much impoverished to redeem them. In this way vast riches accrued to their establishments. They understood, to perfection, all of the traditional machinery of the Church for extracting money from high and low. The exhibition of relics, the performance of miracles, and above all the sale of indulgences, and of masses for the dead, formed an open



sluice through which a steady golden stream poured into the monastic treasury” (Conant, *Popular History of the Translation*, pp. 5, 8).

- e. All orders of Roman Catholic clergy were exempt from civil jurisdiction and could provide a safe haven for criminals. “A clergyman, of whatever offence against the laws of the land he might be guilty, could not be tried by any civil court of the realm. All such offenders were claimed by the Church whose tribunals, subject only to appeals to Rome, dealt so tenderly with her beloved sons, that the land groaned under the crimes of its religious teachers. It was publicly stated to Henry II. by his judges, that during the first ten years of his reign, more than a hundred murders had been committed by clergymen, besides thefts, robberies, and other crimes, for which they could not punish them. ... they maintained in full force the ancient right of sanctuary, that is, of harboring fugitives from justice. Once within the sacred precincts of church or abbey, they could defy the law and all its ministers. This usage, first intended as a shield to the oppressed, had now become the refuge of the vilest criminals. Debtors, able but unwilling to pay, thieves, assassins, felons of every sort, looked out securely from under the wing of the Church and laughed at justice. Thus protected through the day, they often issued from the holy portals under cover of night to pursue their trade of burglary, arson, or highway robbery, not always unattended by such as had a more permanent residence in the secure abode” (Conant, pp. 6, 12).

- f. The clergy lived in debauchery.

- (1) By the early 12th century, celibacy was enforced upon all of the clergy. “The name of Anselm ... should be forever infamous to the friend of humanity, for the pitiless rigor with which he enforced this measure. In 1102, he held an ecclesiastical council at London, where no fewer than ten canons were made for this single object. All priests, even the very lowest, were commanded to put away their wives immediately, not to suffer them to live on any lands belonging to the Church, never to see or speak to them, except in cases of the greatest necessity and in the presence of two or three witnesses. ‘Those unhallowed wretches who refused, were instantly to be deposed and excommunicated, and all their goods, as well as the goods and persons of their wives, as in the case of adulteresses, were to be forfeited to the bishop of the diocese’ [*Henry’s History of Great Britain*, 4th ed., 1805, vol. v. p. 307]. Succeeding prelates followed the lead of Anselm, and episcopal and legantine councils urged the measure, till the long struggle ended in the final establishment of celibacy, and the secular clergy were sealed to utter and irreclaimable profligacy” (Conant, pp. 6-7).

- (2) The monasteries, which were supposed to be places of strict holiness, were more like brothels. “Their profligacy was equal to their luxury. Those hells of vice, uncovered in the monasteries by the commissioners of Henry VIII. In the sixteenth century, were not the growth of that age alone. Such as they were then they were two centuries before, and the cry that went up from them to the ear of heaven was like that of Sodom and Gomorrah” (Conant, p. 10).
- (3) The Augustinian begging friars carried this debauchery to every strata of society. They were responsible only to the Pope and could travel at will to every parish. “When the barefoot Friar, clad in his serge gown, and weary with toiling over the rough and miry ways, announced in some neglected hamlet that he had come to offer pardons, indulgences, the redemption of their deceased friends from purgatory, and all the precious wares of the Church, at a price within the reach of the poorest laborer or beggar, it seemed to the deluded people like good tidings of great joy. He could, moreover, by certain old rags, pigs’ bones, rusty nails, bits of rotten wood, and similar rubbish which he carried about with him under the name of relics, ensure them good crops, and fruitful herds, and faithful wives, all for a very reasonable consideration. His animated harangues, seasoned with marvellous stories, all to the honor and glory of his Order, took their ears captive. Then he was so affable, so condescending! He was not too proud to sit down under the thatched roof and eat with his rustic hosts, washing down the plain fare with draughts from the pewter tankard, while his merry joke and tale were the best sauce of the feast. ... This was the most successful blow which had ever yet been struck for the Papacy. Hitherto, the relation between the clergy and people had been such as to allow of a wholesome dislike of the priesthood. ... But under this new form, it wormed itself into the very heart of the people. It fell in with all their prejudices, flattered their vanity, vulgarized religion to their tastes, cheapened it to their means, and bound them, heart and soul, to their spiritual teachers. Their special commission, held directly from the Pope, rendering them amenable to himself alone, gave the Friars a great advantage. Under this all-powerful sanction they ranged from parish to parish, from diocese to diocese, regardless of all prescriptive rights, literally underselling all competitors, and crowding them out of market. Crime of every sort, secure of absolution in the most private manner and at the cheapest rate, increased with fearful rapidity. One bishop complained that he had in his diocese some two thousand malefactors, of whom not fourteen had received absolution from parish priests, who yet defied punishment, and claimed their right to the sacraments on the pretence of having been absolved by the Frairs” (Conant, pp. 14-16).

g. Under these conditions, the people were steeped in ignorance and immorality and lawlessness was rampant. “Violence and bribery everywhere overawed or

corrupted justice. ‘There was not,’ we are told, ‘so much as one of the king’s ministers and judges who did not receive bribes, and very few who did not extort them’ [Henry, vol. viii, p. 384]. Perjury was a vice so universal, that the words of scripture might have found an almost literal application to the English people, from the king to the serf -- ‘All men are liars.’ Life and property were kept in perpetual insecurity, by the numerous and ferocious bands of robbers which roamed over the country, under the protection of powerful barons, who sheltered them in their castles, and shared with them their booty. Englishmen and Englishwomen were still sold like cattle at the great fairs. Grossness of manners characterized all ranks, and exhibited itself in the most revolting forms of licentiousness among the leading classes. ‘Like priest, like people,’ was never more fully verified than in this portion of English history” (Conant, pp. 22,23).

h. The Roman Catholic Church was not interested in granting the people access to the Bible.

(1) The Council of Toulouse (1229) and the Council of Tarragona (1234) had forbidden the laity to possess or read the vernacular translations of the Bible. The Council of Toulouse used these words: “We prohibit the permission of the books of the Old and New Testament to laymen, except perhaps they might desire to have the Psalter, or some Breviary for the divine service, or the Hours of the blessed Virgin Mary, for devotion; expressly forbidding their having the other parts of the Bible translated into the vulgar tongue” (Allix, *Ecclesiastical History*, II, p. 213). The declarations of these Councils were in effect during Wycliffe’s day.

(2) What Rome allowed were only small portions, usually from the Gospels but never from Paul’s Epistles. Catholic Scripture portions were published together with apocryphal and legendary stories and Mary was commonly exalted higher than Jesus Christ. Consider, for example, the rightly named *GOLDEN LEGEND*. This was published widely in Europe and England prior to the Reformation and it was alleged to be excerpts from the Bible, but it was filled with legends about the “saints” and “the Bible scraps are lost in a sea of fiction” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 108). Consider also the 13th century *MIRROR OF THE BLESSED LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST*. This Latin work was translated into English by Nicholas Love and went through eight editions from 1484 to 1530. Alleged to be an “expanded gospel harmony,” it was actually filled with legend and had little to do with the Bible. “The book is not long, but it is padded out with long meditations by and about the Blessed Virgin Mary, who has the overwhelming presence. Although half the book is on the Crucifixion, the Gospels’ narrative is only just visible, overtaken by the Virgin Mary’s long accounts of her own suffering at that event” (Daniell, p. 161). (It sounds like the original for Mel

Gibson's movie *The Passion of the Christ*!) This was the type of "Scripture" that Rome allowed the people to have. It is telling that with the publication of Tyndale's New Testament in 1526, printing of Love's *Mirror* suddenly ceased.

- (3) Theological studies ignored the Bible and were devoted instead to foolish questions. "The Universities could boast their subtle, sublime, profound, angelic, and seraphic doctors of theology, who could discuss through endless folios the questions: 'Does the glorified body of Christ stand or sit in Heaven? Is the body of Christ, which is eaten in the sacrament, dressed or undressed? Were the clothes in which Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, real or only apparent? ...' ... Even a copy of the Latin Vulgate was scarcely to be found at the Universities. In 1353, three or four young Irish priests came over to England to study divinity; but were obliged to return home 'because not a copy of the Bible was to be found at Oxford'" (Conant, pp. 21, 22).
- (4) One of Wycliffe's enemies, Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, complained that by translating the Scriptures into English and thus laying it "open to the laity and to women who could read" Wycliffe was casting the gospel pearl under the feet of swine. This was the attitude that was typical of Roman Catholic leaders in that day.

## **An Overview of Wycliffe's Life**

1. Wycliffe was born in Yorkshire in 1324 and educated at Oxford. He was a fellow of Merton College, and from 1361 to about 1366 was Master of Balliol College. In 1372 he received a doctorate in theology.
2. In the early part of his ministry, when he began preaching against the Friars who swarmed across the land and against the Pope, Wycliffe was popular both with the king and with the authorities at Oxford. The king shared a dislike for the Pope's interference in England's affairs, and the leaders at Oxford shared Wycliffe's animosity toward the Friars.
3. In 1374 Wycliffe became chaplain to King Edward III and was appointed to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire. Some parts of the ancient church remain from Wycliffe's times. There is a chair still there that he allegedly used and the "Wycliffe Door" on the side of the church away from the river was the door that he used. The existing pulpit is a copy of the one that he preached from.
- 4 Beginning in 1377 Wycliffe was fiercely persecuted by the Roman Catholic authorities in England at the instigation of the Pope in Rome because of his Bible doctrine.
5. In 1381 he was put out of Oxford for denying the Roman dogma of transubstantiation and he

retired to Lutterworth. The next year a sermon was preached from St. Mary the Virgin Church, the Oxford university church, denouncing Wycliffe's followers as *Lollards*. He produced a voluminous amount of writing until his death in 1384. "Some 57 Latin works were written between 1380 and December 1384" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 73). It was during this time that the first English Bible was completed.

6. Wycliffe died on the last day of December 1384.

## **Wycliffe's Doctrine**

Wycliffe was a Catholic priest but began to preach against Rome's errors in his mid-30s.

1. He did not reject Rome all at once but gradually grew in his understanding of Scripture. There is a lot we do not know about his doctrine, as many of his writings have perished, but we do know that Wycliffe exposed many of Rome's errors.

2. Wycliffe's foundational doctrine was that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice and that men have the right to interpret Scripture for themselves before the Lord (and not be dependent upon Rome). He said, "Believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which all may understand."

3. Wycliffe believed the Bible to be the Word of God without error from beginning to end. One of Wycliffe's major works was "On the Truth of Sacred Scripture," which was "a defence of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible."

a. He testified, "It is impossible for any part of the Holy Scriptures to be wrong. In Holy Scripture is all the truth; one part of Scripture explains another" (David Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 48).

b. Wycliffe believed that the Scripture was "a divine exemplar conceived in the mind of God before creation, and before the material Scriptures were written down" (Malcolm Lambert, *Medieval Heresy: Popular Movements from the Gregorian Reform to the Reformation*, 1998, p. 230). This is the testimony of Psalm 119:89: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

4. He taught that the apostolic churches have only elders and deacons "and declared his conviction that all orders above these had been introduced by Caesarean pride" (Henry Shelton, *History of the Christian Church*, II, 1895, p. 415).

5. Wycliffe was very bold against the pope, contending that "it is blasphemy to call any head of the church, save Christ alone" (Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, 1740, p. 7). Consider some other statements by Wycliffe on the subject of the papacy:

“It is supposed, and with much probability, that the Roman pontiff is the great Antichrist.”

“How than shall any sinful wretch, who knows not whether he be damned or saved, constrain men to believe that he is head of holy Church?” (Shelton, II, p. 415).

“Antichrist puts many thousand lives in danger for his own wretched life. Why, is he not a fiend stained foul with homicide who, though a priest, fights in such a cause?” (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 46, 47).

6. Wycliffe taught that men have the right to have the Bible in their own languages and was willing to endure the wrath of the Catholic authorities by translating the Scriptures into English. When Wycliffe began the translation work, the Pope in Rome issued “bulls” against him. Wycliffe’s reply was as follows:

“You say it is heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English. You call me a heretic because I have translated the Bible into the common tongue of the people. Do you know whom you blaspheme? Did not the Holy Ghost give the Word of God at first in the mother-tongue of the nations to whom it was addressed? Why do you speak against the Holy Ghost? You say that the Church of God is in danger from this book. How can that be? Is it not from the Bible only that we learn that God has set up such a society as a Church on the earth? Is it not the Bible that gives all her authority to the Church? Is it not from the Bible that we learn who is the Builder and Sovereign of the Church, what are the laws by which she is to be governed, and the rights and privileges of her members? Without the Bible, what charter has the Church to show for all these? It is you who place the Church in jeopardy by hiding the Divine warrant, the missive royal of her King, for the authority she wields and the faith she enjoins” (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, pp. 45-47).

7. Wycliffe eventually rejected Rome’s key dogma of transubstantiation. He wrote: “May the thing made turn again and make him that made it? Thou then that art an earthly man, by what reason mayst thou say that thou makest thy Maker? Were this doctrine true, it would follow that the thing which is not God today shall be God tomorrow; yea, the thing that is without spirit of life, but groweth in the field by nature, shall another time be God. And yet we ought to believe that God is without beginning or ending” (Wycliffe, *Wyckett*).

8. There is some evidence that Wycliffe rejected infant baptism, at least toward the end of his life.

- a. There is evidence of this from his own writings. Wycliffe taught that “baptism doth not confer, but only signify grace, which was given before.” This principle undermines the doctrine of infant baptism, as the baptism of a baby cannot signify

grace that was previously given as it does in believer's baptism. The *Martyrs Mirror*, first published in Dutch in 1660, states that in 1370 Wycliffe issued an article "declared to militate against infant baptism" (p. 322).

- b. There is also evidence of this from the Catholic authorities. Thomas Walden and Joseph Vicecomes claimed that Wycliffe rejected infant baptism and they charged him with Anabaptist views. Walden, who wrote against the Wycliffites or Hussites in the early part of the 1400s, called Wycliffe "one of the seven heads that came out of the bottomless pit, for denying infant baptism, that heresie of the Lollards, of whom he was so great a ringleader" (Danver's *Treatise*; cited by Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 72).
- c. Even if Wycliffe did not entirely deny infant baptism, it is certain that many of his Lollard followers did. The term "Lollard," like that of "Waldensian," was a general term that encompassed a wide variety of doctrine and practice. While many of the Lollards retained infant baptism, it is certain that others did not. (For more about the Lollards, see the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* on Church History, available from Way of Life Literature.)

### **Other Quotes from Wycliffe's Writings**

John Wycliffe's writings are truly amazing, not only in their number and breadth, but in their simplicity. His was a day of affectatious writing, a day when the educated wrote in Latin or French rather than in English, to tickle the ears of the scholarly rather than to edify the humble. Though Wycliffe was one of the greatest scholars of that day, though he was intimate with kings and princes and nobles, he wrote for the common man. The simplicity of his writing is testified by the fact that we can understand him today, more than 600 years later, merely by modernizing his words to a small degree.

Wycliffe typically wrote short tracts. By this means his writings were multiplied widely even in that day before printing. Religious tracts are powerful things, and Wycliffe understood this. They are more read than books.

"I should be worse than an infidel were I not to defend unto the death the law of Christ; and certain I am, that it is not in the power of the heretics, and disciples of antichrist, to impugn this evangelical doctrine. On the contrary, I trust through our Lord's mercy to be superabundantly rewarded, after this short and miserable life, for the lawful contention which I wage. I know from the Gospel, that antichrist, with all his devices, can only kill the body; but Christ, in whose cause I contend, can cast both body and soul into hell-fire. Sure I am, that he will not suffer his servants to want what is needful for them, since he freely exposed himself to a dreadful death for their sakes, and has ordained that all his most beloved disciples should pass through severe suffering with a view to their good" (quoted from Conant, *Popular History of English Bible Translation*, pp. 49, 50).

“To any degree of true love to Jesus, no soul can attain unless he be truly meek. For a proud soul seeks to have his own will, and so he shall never come to any degree of God’s love. Even the lower that a soul sitteth in the valley of meekness, so many the more streams of grace and love come thereto. And if the soul be high in the hills of pride, the wind of the fiend bloweth away all manner of goodness therefrom” (Wycliffe, *The Poor Caitiff*). [*Caitiff* was a name for a common person. *The Poor Caitiff* is a collection of Wycliffe’s tracts.]

“Singular love is, when all solace and comfort is closed out of the heart but the love of Jesus alone. Other delight or other joy pleases not; for the sweetness of him is so comforting and lasting, his love is so burning and gladdening, that he who is in this degree may well feel the fire of love burning in his soul. That fire is so pleasant that no man can tell but he that feeleth it, and not fully he. Then the soul is Jesus loving, on Jesus thinking, and Jesus desiring, only burning in coveting of him; singing in him, resting on him. Then the thought turns to song and melody” (Ibid.).

“God playeth with his child when he suffereth him to be tempted; as a mother rises from her much beloved child, and hides herself and leaves him alone, and suffers him to cry, Mother, Mother, so that he looks about, cries and weeps for a time; and at last when the child is ready to be overset with troubles and weeping, she comes again, clasps him in her arms, kisses him and wipes away the tears. So our Lord suffereth his loved child to be tempted and troubled for a time, and withdraweth some of his solace and full protection, to see what his child will do; and when he is about to be overcome by temptations, then he defendeth him and comforteth him by his grace” (Ibid.).

“For, no doubt, as our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles profess plainly, Antichrist and his cursed disciples should come, and deceive many men by hypocrisy and tyranny; and the best armor of Christian men against this cursed chieftain with his host, is the text of holy writ” (Wycliffe, prologue to Luke’s Gospel).

“As the faith of the Church is contained in the Scriptures, the more these are known in their true meaning the better; and inasmuch as secular men should assuredly understand the faith they profess, that faith should be taught them in whatever language may be best known to them. Forasmuch, also, as the doctrines of our faith are more clearly and exactly expressed in the Scriptures, than they may probably be by priests--seeing, if I may so speak, that many prelates are but too ignorant of Holy Scripture, while others conceal many parts of it; and as the verbal instructions of priests have many other defects--the conclusion is abundantly manifest, that believers should ascertain for themselves what are the true matters of their faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they fully understand. For the laws made by prelates are not to be received as matters of faith, nor are we to confide in their public instructions, nor in any of their words, but as they are founded on Holy Writ--since the Scriptures contain the whole truth. And this translation of them into English should therefore do at least this good, viz.: placing bishops and priests above suspicion as to the parts of it which they profess to explain. Other means, such as the friars, prelates, the pope, may all prove defective; and to provide against this, Christ and



his Apostles evangelized to the people in their own language. To this end, indeed, did the Holy Spirit endow them with the knowledge of tongues. Why, then, should not the living disciples of Christ do in this respect as they did?” (Wycliffe, written after his retirement to Lutterworth after being evicted from Oxford, quoted by Conant, pp. 53, 54).

## **The Connection between Wycliffe and the Waldenses**

It is important to understand that there were already Waldensian and other separatist Christians, in England during the days of Wycliffe. Waldenses came to England in the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries.

1. The *Martyrs Mirror* describes the persecution of 443 Waldenses in England in 1391. At least one of these told the inquisitors that he had been a Waldensian for 30 years. That takes us back to 1361, when Wycliffe was only 37 years old and when he first began preaching against Catholic errors.

2. Anglican historian Joseph Milner notes the possible connection between the Waldenses and John Wycliffe: “The connection between France and England, during the whole reign of Edward III, was so great, that it is by no means improbable, that Wickliffe himself derived his first impressions of religion from [Raynard] Lollard [a Bible-believing Waldensian leader who was burned at the stake at Cologne]” (Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, 1819, III, p. 509).

3. Catholic writers associated Wycliffe with the Waldenses. “Thomas Walden, who wrote against Wickliff, says, that the doctrine of Peter Waldo was conveyed from France into England—and that among others Wickliff received it. In this opinion he is joined by Alphonsus de Castro, who says that Wickliff only brought to light again the errors of the Waldenses. Cardinal Bellarmine, also, is pleased to say that ‘Wickliff could add nothing to the heresy of the Waldenses’” (William Jones, *A History of the Christian Church*, 1819, II, p. 91).

4. Joshua Thomas, in his *History of the Welsh Baptists* (1795), describes some Baptists who lived in the 14th century in Olchon in Herefordshire, and he believed Wycliffe “received much of his light in the gospel” from these separatist believers.

5. Frederick Nolan, who diligently pursued the history of the transmission of the biblical text, said the Lollards were disciples of the Waldenses (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Received Text*, 1815, p. xix, footnote 1).

(For more about the Waldenses, see the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* on Church History, available from Way of Life Literature.)

## Wycliffe's Battles with the Catholic Church

For his translation efforts and his biblical views, Wycliffe was hounded by the Roman Catholic authorities.

1. Wycliffe was required to appear before the Catholic bishops in February 1377 to give an account of his doctrine.

- a. This occurred at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, where the Bishop of London, named Courtney, was the chief priest. It was just behind St. Paul's that English Bibles were burned from the days just following those of Wycliffe to those of William Tyndale.
- b. John of Gaunt (Duke of Lancaster, fourth son of King Edward III), Percy, Earl Marshal of England, and other nobles accompanied Wycliffe to defend him, and the trial was broken up by a riot before a decision could be reached. "Forgetting all produce and propriety, he [Courtney, the Bishop of London] started angrily from his seat, and addressed the two noblemen in a tone of insolent rebuke, such as peers and soldiers are not wont to endure patiently. Their reply was in a spirit no less haughty; an the fierce colloquy ended in a tumult which broke up the meeting, and the innocent occasion of the uproar quietly withdrew, without having been asked a question, or having uttered a word" (Conant, *Popular History*, p. 34).

2. The bishops then appealed to Pope Gregory XI, who issued five papal bulls against Wycliffe in May 1377. At that time the Pope's headquarters was in Avignon, France. The bulls were addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and to the University of Oxford. The Pope raged against Wycliffe, calling him "Master in Error." The authorities were ordered to put Wycliffe into prison and keep him there until "judgment be received from the Holy See." The death of King Edward III forced a brief delay in the clergy's attempt to enact the papal bulls, because Wycliffe's friend John of Gaunt assumed practical control of the throne since Edward's son Richard II was so young.

3. In April 1378 Wycliffe was again required to appear before the bishops to be investigated for the heresies he had been charged of by the Pope.

- a. This was held at Lambeth Palace in London, which would later become the home of the infamous Lollard's Tower where so many dissenters were imprisoned.
- b. Before Wycliffe could be charged, Joan of Kent, widow of the Black Prince and mother of King Richard II, intervened, demanding that the trial stop and that no judgment be made against the Reformer.

4. The Catholic authorities in England continued to hate Wycliffe but they were thwarted in their

efforts to imprison and kill him. Their attitude toward him and toward his vernacular translation is evident from what Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote to Pope John XXIII in 1411. “This pestilent and wretched John Wyclif, of cursed memory, that son of the old serpent ... endeavoured by every means to attack the very faith and sacred doctrine of Holy Church, devising -- to fill up the measure of his malice -- the expedient of a new translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue” (David Daniel, *The Bible in English*, p. 67).

5. In 1381 Wycliffe was condemned even by his own Oxford University because of his rejection of transubstantiation.

- a. Wycliffe preached against Rome’s doctrine of the Mass with the same boldness that he had preached against the Friars and against the Papacy itself. “It is as if the Devil had been scheming to this effect, saying--‘If I can, by my vicar Antichrist, so far seduce believers as to bring them to deny that this sacrament is bread, and to believe in it as a contemptible quality without a substance, I may after that, and in the same manner, lead them to believe whatever I may wish; inasmuch as the opposite is plainly taught, both by the language of Scripture, and by the very senses of mankind.’ Doubtless, after a while, these simple-hearted believers may be brought to say, that however a prelate may live--be he effeminate, a homicide, a simonist, or stained with any other vice--this must never be believed concerning him by a people who would be regarded as duly obedient. But by the grace of Christ, I will keep clear of the hersy which teaches that if the Pope and Cardinals assert a certain thing to be the sense of Scripture, therefore so it is; for that were to set them above the Apostles” (Wycliffe, *Triologus*).
- b. In the spring of 1381, Wycliffe published 12 theses on this issue. He declared, “... the bread we see on the altar is not Christ, nor any part of him, but simply an effectual sign of him; and that the doctrines of transubstantion, identification, and impanation, have no basis in Scripture.” He challenged the University to a debate on the subject.
- c. The Chancellor of the Oxford, Berton, assembled a secret council and condemned Wycliffe’s doctrine and issued this decree: “If any person, of whatever degree, state, or condition, shall in future publicly teach such doctrine in the University, or shall listen to one so teaching, he shall be suspended from all scholastic exercises, shall be liable to the greater excommunication, and shall be committed to prison.” Representatives were sent to announce this decree to Wycliffe while he was teaching a class. Wycliffe was forced to retire to Lutterworth.
- d. In the summer of 1382, Wycliffe was condemned in a sermon preached at the Oxford University church, St. Mary the Virgin. It was in this sermon that his followers were denounced as Lollards for the first time.

## **The Protecting Hand of God upon Wycliffe**

Wycliffe would have been cut off by the Roman Catholic authorities had he not, by divine intervention, been protected by certain powerful individuals and unusual events.

1. One of these was JOHN OF GAUNT (spelled Ghent in his native Flanders) the Duke of Lancaster and the father of King Henry VI. He was the effective ruler of England for some time because King Edward III was very old and his son Richard II was only a child. John was a large man and a bold knight. His armor, which is displayed today in the Tower of London, is 6 foot 9 inches. He protected Wycliffe for many years until Wycliffe rejected Rome's doctrine of transubstantiation.

2. Another protector was QUEEN JOAN (1328-85). She was the wife of Edward III (1360-76), also known as the Black Prince because of his black armor. When Edward died in 1376, Joan became the Queen Mother to her son Richard II. In 1378, the enemies of Wycliffe called him to stand before a tribunal of bishops in Lambeth Palace. Wycliffe was accused of spreading heresies, but by the following means the bishops were frustrated in carrying out any sentence. "... Sir Richard Clifford entered with a message from the Queen Mother, the widow of the Black Prince, forbidding them to pass sentence upon Wycliffe" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 33). The trial ceased.

3. QUEEN ANNE, the wife of Richard II (1367-1400), also assisted Wycliffe. She was daughter to the emperor Charles IV and sister of Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, and thus held the position of Elizabeth of Prague. Anne was only a teenager when she was brought to England to wed Richard. She brought versions of Scriptures in German, Bohemian, and Latin with her into England. She loved Wycliffe's doctrine and sent copies of Wycliffe's books into Bohemia by her attendants (Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 69). Many of Wycliffe's works that were completely destroyed in England survived in copies in Bohemia. Anne died in June 1394, at the age of twenty-seven.

4. Further, in 1378 Pope Gregory XI died, and THE GREAT PAPAL SCHISM began, during which there were two (Gregory XII and Benedict III) and then three popes, and these were too busy hurling curses at one another to worry much about Wycliffe in England!

## **Wycliffe's Missionary Endeavors**

Wycliffe not only translated the Bible but he carried out missionary endeavors.

1. He had a powerful influence through his extensive writings, which were widely distributed in England and even helped create a separatist revival movement in Europe.
2. Wycliffe had a missionary heart and he trained and sent out preachers to proclaim the Gospel

of the grace of Jesus Christ. These were called “Bible men” and Lollards, and they were hounded and bitterly persecuted by the Catholic authorities. (The term “Lollard” predated Wycliffe. It might have been derived from a Waldensian preacher named Walter Lollardus, an Englishman who was burnt for heresy in Cologne. See William Canton, *The Bible and the Anglo-Saxon People*, 1914, p. 42; and Joseph Ivimey, *The History of the English Baptists*, 1811, I, p. 64.) “Like the seventy sent out by our Lord, they sent on foot, clad in coarse garments, the pilgrim’s staff in their hands--and ... with a Latin Bible hid in the bosom of their gowns. Wherever they found an audience--whether in a church or a church-yard, in the busy market-place, amid the noisy chaffering and boisterous amusements of the fair--there they proclaimed to the people ‘all the words of this life.’ To the venal sale of indulgences and priestly absolution, they opposed the unbought grace of the gospel; to the invocation of saints, the one Mediator between God and man; to the worship of pictures and images, the worship of the one living and true God; to the traditions of men and the authority of priests, the pure revelation of God’s will in the Holy Scriptures. Their own blameless lives enforced their teachings. Asking nothing, they received thankfully what was required for their simple wants; and even from this were ever ready to spare something for the needy. ... Many country baronets of wealth and influence likewise espoused their cause; and sometimes, when danger was apprehended, a body-guard of gentlemen was seen around the pulpit, ready, if necessary, to defend with their good swords the right of Englishmen to speak and to hear, according to the dictates of their own consciences. The intimidated sheriff, having served on the preacher a citation to appear before the bishop, would retire; and before adequate forces could be raised to execute the writ, the evangelist was proclaiming in some far-off hamlet the glad tidings of salvation to its neglected poor” (Conant, *Popular History*, pp. 42, 43).

3. Wycliffe also had copies of the hand-written Scriptures made and distributed not only in England but also abroad in Europe. That these multiplied widely is evident from the record that still exists of the many copies that were confiscated by the authorities: “By reference to the Bishop’s Registers it will appear that these little books were numerous, as they are often specified as being found upon the persons of those accused. Sometimes the Gospels are spoken of either separately, or together; or it is the book of Acts, or the Epistle of James, or the Apocalypse that is specified. It appears also from these Registers, that many of those who possessed these little volumes were either servants or tradesmen” (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, 1886, p. 75).

## **The End of Wycliffe’s Life**

1. John Wycliffe continued to take a stand for the truth and to progress in spiritual strength and wisdom even in his old age. In 1381, just three years before his death, Wycliffe boldly proclaimed that the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation was false. He taught that the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper do not change substance and are merely symbolic of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Wycliffe’s protector, John Gaunt, refused to accept Wycliffe’s denial of Rome’s foundational

doctrine. He warned Wycliffe to be silent about this, but Wycliffe refused, though he knew by his stand he would probably lose his protection from an earthly perspective. Gaunt did withdraw his guardianship, but Wycliffe put his trust in One who is a more dependable and effective protector than a 6 foot 9 inch knight!

3. Wycliffe was expelled from his teaching position at Oxford and withdrew to his parish of Lutterworth where he lived until his death.

4. In May 1382, Wycliffe was called before yet another synod of ecclesiastical authorities.

- a. This is called the Blackfriars' Synod, because it was held in the monastery of Blackfriars in London (so named because of the black robes worn by the Dominican friars or monks). The Dominicans had been at the forefront of the Inquisition since their appointment by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) in the early 13th century. Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and a great persecutor, stayed at the monastery on his visit to London in 1522.

- (1) When the 47 bishops and monks and religious doctors took their seats, a powerful earthquake shook the city. Huge stones fell out of castle walls and pinnacles toppled. "Wycliffe called it a judgment of God and afterwards described the gathering as the 'Earthquake Council'" (Fountain, *John Wycliffe*, p. 39).

- (2) The synod condemned Wycliffe, charging him specifically with 10 heresies and 16 errors. His writings were forbidden and the king gave authority to imprison anyone who believed the condemned doctrines.

- b. The monastery, which originally stretched from Shoe Lane off Fleet Street right down to the Thames at Puddle Dock, ceased to function as a religious order during the days of King Henry VIII. Later it was used as one of Shakespeare's playhouses. Though the monastery no longer exists and even the buildings are gone, with only a part of a wall left that can be seen from St. Anne's churchyard, that area of London is still called Blackfriars and the Blackfriars Bridge over the Thames originates there.

5. Wycliffe died on December 31, 1384. He was seized with paralysis on December 29 while performing his reinterpreted Mass at Lutterworth Church and was carried out the small side door that still bears his name. He remained unconscious for two days before his soul was given up to God. It was not only a year that ended, it was an era. The new year, 1385, marked the first entire year that the English people had their own Bible.

## The Wycliffe Bible

1. Wycliffe's greatest influence was through the Bible that he translated. W.R. Cooper, in his introduction to The Tyndale's Society's modernized edition of the Wycliffe New Testament (London: The British Library, 2002), wisely observes: "John Wycliffe, who gave his name to the English Bible that followed him, is considered by many to have been a morning star of the later Reformation, and in many ways he was. Yet it is the English Bible that bears his name that is the real morning star. We must remember that it was no Oxford theologian whose words people memorised and bore in their hearts through persecution, torture and the stake. Wycliffe was certainly the greatest teacher of his age, but even he was quite unable to convert sinners and transform lives. Only the word of God can do that, and it was the appearance of the English Bible from Wycliffe's school that truly heralded the dawning of the great English Reformation that was to follow."

- a. Wycliffe began by translating portions of the New Testament and publishing individual books of the Bible. He did this throughout his career. We know that he did this with the Gospels (Conant, pp. 52, 53).
- b. The New Testament was completed in 1380 and the Old Testament in 1382, just two years before Wycliffe died.
- c. How much of the entire Bible was translated by Wycliffe himself and how much was accomplished by helpers, we cannot know. It is popular among contemporary historians to deny that Wycliffe had any part in the actual translation, but we do not accept this position. The ancient historians such as William Caxton (1482), John Foxe (1554), and Thomas Fuller (1662) were united in their opinion that Wycliffe did at least part of the translation; and in my estimation contemporary historians have not refuted this historical view.
- d. Wycliffe's friend Nicholas Hereford was probably involved in the translation and possibly the revision. Hereford is named in some manuscripts.
- e. The order of books in the New Testament followed the standard Latin arrangement, as follows: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, Acts (the Deeds of the Apostles), James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude, Revelation.
- f. Many copies of the Wycliffe New Testament included the *Epistle to Laodiceans* (between Colossians and 1 Thessalonians). This epistle, a little longer than 3 John, claims to be a letter written by Paul to the church of Laodicea. Such a letter is mentioned in Col. 4:16, but it does not exist in Greek and was never counted as part of the Canon of Scripture. Cooper observes, "The Lollards commonly regarded the

Epistle as genuine, even though fully aware that it was omitted from the canon and certainly from some of the Latin manuscripts of their day.”

- g. The Wycliffe Bible had some fascinating renderings. Following are a couple of examples:

Psalm 91:5 said the child of God would not be afraid “of an arrow flying in the day, of a goblin going in darkneses.” There are goblins in the sense of evil spirits and demonic powers that are aligned against the child of God, so this translation of the Hebrew word ---- is interesting. In the King James Bible, this word is translated dread, dreadful, fear, fearful, great fear, terror, and great terror.

Matthew 3:4 says of John the Baptist “and his meat was honeysuckers and honey of the wood.” While honey of the wood referred to wild honey, we aren’t sure where honeysuckers comes from!

Luke 2:13 has an interesting description of the Lord’s heavenly hosts: “And suddenly there was made with the angel a multitude of heavenly knighthood, herying [praising] God and saying.” Wycliffe lived in a day when armies were led by bold knights in their impressive armor with their colorful standards waving, and this makes for an effectual translation of “hosts.”

- h. The Wycliffe Bible was not printed (until the 19th century). Tyndale’s was the first printed English New Testament.

(1) The Wycliffe Scriptures were often distributed in portions rather than as a complete Bible or even a complete New Testament, because these were easier to copy and transport and conceal.

(2) A copy of an entire handwritten Wycliffe Bible was very expensive. “Nicholas Belward suffered from popish cruelty in 1429, for having in his possession a copy of Wiclif’s New Testament. That copy cost him four marks and forty pence. This sum, so much greater was the value of money then than it is now, was considered as a sufficient annual salary for a curate. The same value at the present time would pay for many hundreds of copies of the Testament, well printed and bound” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855).

(3) Surely many believers would be motivated to make their own copies of the Scripture, and doubtless this would have been the case with preachers. I have not seen this important point emphasized in other histories of the Bible, but it is only reasonable. I don’t believe it was only a matter purchasing a copy from a professional scribe. Though time consuming, it is not that difficult to make a



copy of the New Testament. In the first few years of my Christian life, which was B.C. or *Before Computers* (I was converted in 1973 at age 23), I copied down copious portions of Scripture in my zeal for memorization and in the process of my studies. Had I lived in an earlier time when the Scriptures were not available in printed form, I have no doubt that I would have made my own copy from Genesis to Revelation, no matter how long it took, and I would also have made copies of portions to give away to other brethren and even to unbelievers. During the early months after I was saved I tediously made copies of my testimony by typing it repeatedly and using carbon paper to multiply my efforts, because I was too poor to afford to have it printed. I handed these out in my evangelistic work. I am confident that multitudes of early believers shared this zeal to make copies both of God's Word and of evangelistic pamphlets. It is only natural, for the believer is born of the Word (Jam. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), lives by the Word (Mat. 4:4), continues in the truth by the Word (John 8:31-32), is a doer of the Word (Jam. 1:22), grows by the Word (1 Pet. 2:2), operates by the faith that comes from the Word (Rom. 10:17), is cleansed by the Word (Eph. 5:26), and defends himself by the Word (Eph. 6:17).

2. The original Wycliffe Bible was revised and it is the revision that was widely distributed for more than a century. Today the original is called the Early Version (EV) and the revision the Later Version (LV). The Later Version first appeared in 1388, shortly after Wycliffe's death, but it continued to be modified somewhat throughout the 15th century.

a. It was probably revised either by JOHN PURVEY or by JOHN TREVISA, probably the latter.

(1) Many histories name John Purvey as the main reviser of the Wycliffe Bible. He was one of Wycliffe's disciples. The later Wycliffe Bible has often been called the Purvey edition. It was so named by Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden, who edited the first printed edition of the Wycliffe Bible (*The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments, in the earliest English versions, made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and his followers*, 1850).

(a) In 1421, Purvey was arrested a second time for his persistence in preaching against Rome's errors and for the distribution of Scriptures. It is said that during his first arrest in 1400, he recanted, but if that is true, he repented of it and ultimately died for his faith.

(b) It is probable that Purvey died in prison in miserable straits for his faith in the Word of God sometime during or after 1427. We are told he "endured great suffering in Saltwood Castle" (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 65). This castle was located in Hythe in Kent. "The first castle was built in 488, probably on a Roman site, but was replaced by a 12th century Norman structure which was extended throughout the next 2 centuries. It was

rendered uninhabitable in 1580 by an earthquake but was restored in the 19th century, since when the tall gatehouse has been used as a residence” (<http://www.ecastles.co.uk/saltwood.html>). The prison there was the archbishop’s prison.

- (2) David Daniell, who has researched the history of the English Bible diligently and from a somewhat more believing perspective than most of his contemporaries, marshalls evidence that John Trevisa was the reviser.
- (a) Trevisa was at Queen’s College, Oxford, in 1342, at the same time as Wycliffe, and was a close friend with men who also were close to Wycliffe. These include Nicholas Hereford and William Middelworth. All three men -- Trevisa, Hereford, and Middelworth -- were evicted from Queen’s College about the same time that Wycliffe was charged with heresy in 1377-78.
  - (b) Trevisa translated at least six books into English, including Ranulph (or Ralph) Higden’s *Polychronicon* (“Wycliffe’s favourite history book”) and Bartholomeus’s *De Proprietatibus Rerum*.
  - (c) In the preface to his translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, Trevisa discussed his theory of translation and argued in favor of the Bible being translated into English. Note the following excerpt: “Also the gospel, and prophecy, and the right faith of holy church must be taught and preached to English men that can no Latin. Then the gospel, and prophecy, and the right faith of holy church must be told them in English, and that is not done but by English translation, for such English preaching is very translation, and such English preaching is good and needful; then English translation is good and needful.”
  - (d) When Trevisa was expelled from Queen’s College in 1376 or 77 he took with him the following books, which Daniell describes as “a toolkit for turning the Latin Bible into English” -- a Latin text of the Bible, a Latin grammar and dictionary, a Concordance to the Bible, and commentaries on five books of the Bible, two by Nicholas of Lyra (a favorite commenter among the Wycliffites).
  - (e) Some important ancient histories have cited Trevisa as the translator. Daniell observes, in fact, that everyone up to 1729 ascribed the revision of the Wycliffe Bible to John Trevisa. Histories written in the 15th and 16th centuries were close to the actual time of those events and normally the writers would have known the truth about what happened then far better than someone writing in more modern times. I have learned to be very wary of modern church historians who, while marshalling a wealth of facts often lack the wisdom to interpret them properly, not approaching the subject by faith.

William Caxton, in his preface to his 1482 printing of Trevisa’s translation of

*Polychronicon*, said that Trevisa had also translated the Bible into English. Trevisa had died only about 20 years prior to Caxton's birth, so these events were fresh in his day.

Raphael Holinshed, in his *Chronicles* of 1587, said Trevisa translated "the Byble and diverse other treatises."

Miles Smith, in the preface to the 1611 King James Bible, wrote: "Much about that time, even in our King Richard the second's days, John Trevisa translated them into English, and many English Bibles in written hand are yet to be seen with divers; translated, as it is very probable, in that age."

Thomas Fuller, in his *History of the Worthies of England* (1662), wrote: "Some much admire [that] he [Trevisa] would enter on this work [of translating the Bible], so lately performed ... by John Wycliffe. Secondly, the time betwixt Wycliffe and Trevisa was the crisis of the English tongue, which began to be improved in fifty, more than in three hundred years formerly. Many coarse words (to say no worse) used before are refined by Trevisa, whose translation is as much better than Wickliffe's, as worse than Tyndal's."

- b. The reviser, whoever he was, knew that the fear of God and great care are necessary for an accurate translation. The following is from the introduction to the revision: "A translator hath great need to study well the sense both before and after, and then also he hath need to live a clean life and be full devout in prayers, and have not his wit occupied about worldly things, that the Holy Spirit, Author of all wisdom and cunning and truth, dress him for his work and suffer him not to err. God grant to us all grace to know well and to keep well Holy Writ, and to suffer joyfully some pain for it at the last."

3. Wycliffe's translation was based on the Latin Vulgate, and it contained most of the errors common to that version. Following are some examples:

MATTHEW 5:44 — "bless them that curse you" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 6:13 — "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 9:13 — "to repentance" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 15:8 — "draweth nigh unto me with their mouth" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 16:3 — "O ye hypocrites" is omitted in the Wycliffe

MARK 2:17 — "to repentance" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 6:11 — "more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 10:21 — "take up the cross" is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 13:14 — "spoken by Daniel the prophet" is omitted in the Wycliffe

LUKE 2:33 – “Joseph” is changed to “father” in the Wycliffe

----- 2:43 – “Joseph and his mother” is changed to “his parents” in the Wycliffe

----- 4:8 – “get thee behind me Satan” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 11:2-4 – “Our ... which art in heaven ... Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth ... but deliver us from evil” is omitted in the Wycliffe

JOHN 4:42 – “the Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

ACTS 2:30 – “according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 7:30 – “of the Lord” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 16:7 – “Spirit of Jesus” is added in the Wycliffe

----- 17:26 – “blood” is omitted in the Wycliffe

ROMANS 1:16 – “of Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

1 CORINTHIANS 5:7 – “for us” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 7:5 – “fasting” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 15:47 – “the Lord” is omitted in the Wycliffe

EPHESIANS 3:9 – “by Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

COLOSSIANS 1:14 – “through his blood” is missing in the Wycliffe

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1 – “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” is omitted in the Wycliffe

1 TIMOTHY 1:17 – “wise” God is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 3:16 – “God was manifest in the flesh” is changed to “which was manifest in the flesh” in the Wycliffe

----- 6:5 – “from such withdraw thyself” is omitted in the Wycliffe

HEBREWS 1:3 – “by himself” is omitted in the Wycliffe

JAMES 5:16 – “faults” is changed to “sins” in the Wycliffe

1 PETER 1:22 – “through the Spirit” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 4:1 – “for us” is omitted in the Wycliffe

REVELATION 1:11 – “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” is omitted in the Wycliffe

----- 8:13 – “angel” is changed to “eagle” in the Wycliffe

----- 9:11 – “*And by Latin he has the name Exterminans, that is, a destroyer,*” is added in the Wycliffe from the Latin Vulgate.

4. The language of the Wycliffe version is simple and forceful and laid the foundation for other Bibles in English. In the following examples, only the spelling has been modernized.

Wycliffe Bible, John 11:8-12: “The disciples said to him, Master now the Jews soughten for to stone thee, and goest thou thither? Jesus answered whether there be not twelve hours of the day? If any man wander in the night he stomlish, for light is not in him. He saith these things and after these things he saith to him Lazarus our friend sleepeth but I go to raise him from sleep; therefore his disciples saiden: Lord, if he sleepeth, he shall be safe.”

Wycliffe Bible, Luke 2:8-14: “And shepherds were in the same country, waking and keeping the watches of the night on their flock. And lo, the angel of the Lord stood beside them, and the clearness of God shined about them, and they dreaded with great dread. And the angel said to them, Nil ye dread, for lo, I preach to you a great joy that shall be to all people. For a Saviour is born today to you that is Christ the Lord in the city of David. And this is a token to you, ye shall find a young child lapped in cloths and laid in a creche. And suddenly there was made with the angel a multitude of heavenly knighthood, heryng God and saying, Glory be in the highest things to God, and in earth peace to men of good will.”

5. Many phrases from our English Bible of 1611 can be traced back to Wycliffe with only the slightest modification, including the following:

“enter thou into the joy of the Lord”; “for many be called, but few be chosen”; “a prophet is not without honour, but in his own country”; “he that is not against us, is for us”; “suffer ye little children to come to me, and forbid ye them not, for of such is the kingdom of God”; “how hard it is for men that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God”; “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”; “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to each creature”; “and Mary said, Lo! the handmaid of the Lord”; “ask ye, and it shall be given to you; seek ye, and ye shall find; knock ye, and it shall be opened to you”; “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”; “In the beginning was the word”; “he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not”; “for God loved so the world, that he gave his one begotten Son”; “I am bread of life”; “I am the light of the world”; “ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”; “I and the Father be one”; “and Jesus wept”; “straight is the gate and narrow the way”; “and no man ascendeth [up] into heaven, but he that came down from heaven”; “I have overcome the world”; “my kingdom is not of this world”; “what is truth?”; “born again”; “a living sacrifice”; “the deep things of God”; “upbraideth not”; “whited sepulchres”; “for the wages of sin is death”; “ye be the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you”; “when I was a little child, I spake as a little child, I understood as a little child, I thought as a little child”; “I have kept the faith”; “what fellowship hath light with darkness”; “we make known to you the grace of God”; “the world and all that dwell therein is the Lord’s”; “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only”; “for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he shall devour”; “Lo! I stand at the door, and knock”; “and he said to me, It is done; I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.”

6. In fact, some entire verses appear to be brought into the KJV from the Wycliffe (via William Tyndale) almost intact. Following are three examples:

MATTHEW 11:29 “Take ye my yoke upon you, and learn ye of me, for I am mild and meek of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls.”

MATTHEW 18:20 “For where two or three shall be gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”

MATTHEW 22:21 “... Therefore yield ye to Caesar those things that be Caesar’s, and to God those things that be of God.”

7. The Wycliffe Bible had a strong impact on the English language itself. “There is an important relation existing between Vernacular versions of the Scriptures and the languages into which they are translated. So marked is this influence where such translation is made, that it constitutes an epoch in the literary and in the religious history of the people. ... It was a bold stroke on the part of Wycliffe to set forth the Scriptures in the language of the people, but the results far exceeded his fondest expectations. In all simplicity he thought to give the word of God to his own age, but in fact *he laid the foundation for the Reformation in England, and for the permanence and excellence of the English language*” (Blackford Condit, *History of the English Bible*, 1896, pp. 79, 80).

It must be remembered that Wycliffe lived in an era when the English language was new and despised even in its own homeland. Wycliffe literally molded the English language to the Bible and forever changed the character of the language thereby.

“The noble Saxon of our forefathers, displaced at the Conquest, by Latin as the language of books, and by Norman-French as that of polite life, became the badge of degradation and servitude. The English into which it gradually changed, by a mixture with Latin and French, had, in process of time, so far regained the ancient rights of the vernacular, as to be, at this period, the spoken language of the great body of the people. Yet in such contempt was it still held, that scarcely an attempt had been made to use it in composition, till Wickliffe, with his great heart of love for the people, laid hold of it as the vehicle of religious instruction. He took the rude elements [of the emerging English language as it grew from Saxon, French, and Latin] directly from the lips of the despised ploughmen, mechanics, and tradesmen. He gave it back to them in all its unadorned, picturesque simplicity, but fused by the action of his powerful mind into a fitting instrument of thought, and enriched with the noblest literature which the world had produced; the utterances of inspired poets, prophets, and apostles, the inimitable histories, narratives, and portraitures, through which divine wisdom has told the sublime story of providence and redemption” (Conant, p. 56).

8. The Wycliffe Bible had a powerful effect upon the English nation and laid the foundation for

the Reformation. “What seeds were those then sown in the virgin soil of the common English mind! What must have been the quickening of intellectual life, in a community where the Book of books furnished almost the only aliment of the hungry soul! Were not the children eager to read for themselves those wondrous stories? Did not the ear of age forget its deafness, to hear the glad tidings of a Saviour and a future rest? Would not a new consciousness of worth steal into the soul of the rude clown, when he learned what God had done to redeem him? The more deeply we enter into the circumstances and spirit of the times, the stronger will grow the conviction that this first English Bible must have been like an awakening breath from heaven, the beginning of days to the common people of England. ... The light which Wycliffe had kindled, often smothered, then hidden from public view, but never for a moment extinguished, at length mingled its beams with the full day of the Reformation” (Conant, pp. 56, 57, 60).

9. Did William Tyndale have a Wycliffe Bible? This is a fascinating question. Though we cannot speak with certainty on this, it is probable that Tyndale had at least seen the Wycliffe Bible even if he did not have one with him as he translated.

- a. David Daniell observes: “No educated and religiously alert young man brought up in ‘God’s Gloucestershire’ in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries could fail to have heard, and most likely read, a Wyclif Bible. A hostile contemporary apparently recorded that ‘a man could not meet two people on the road, but one of them was a disciple of Wyckliffe’” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 88).
- b. As we have seen, many things that we find in the Tyndale New Testament appear to be brought over largely from the Wycliffe.
- c. In the Prologue to Tyndale’s first New Testament, which was not printed with the Bible but was printed later as a separate pamphlet, Tyndale cites lengthy passages of Scripture. The interesting fact is that he appears to be quoting from memory and they are not from his own translation. “Occasionally there is an exact parallel with Wyclif” (Daniell, p. 89).

## **The Strange Tale of Wycliffe’s Bones**

1. At the Roman Catholic Council of Constance, which met between 1415 and 1418, John Wycliffe was condemned and his bones were ordered dug up and burned. This is the same Catholic council that burned John Huss and Jerome of Prague, ignoring their promise of safe conduct. “As his Bible aroused the English conscience, the pope felt a chill; he heard unearthly sounds rattle through the empty caverns of his soul, and he mistook Wickliff’s bones for his Bible. The moldering skeleton of the sleeping translator polluted the consecrated ground where it slept. The Council of Constance condemned his Bible and his bones to be burnt together” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, p. 315).

2. For some reason, another 13 years passed before the strange deed was actually performed.

- a. It occurred during the reign of Pope Martin V (1417-1431).
- b. In 1428, nearly 44 years after his death, Wycliffe's bones were exhumed and burned and the ashes scattered. The strange ceremony was led by Archbishop Chicheley, head of the Church of England. What sight could be more unscriptural, more pagan, more wicked, than these Catholic leaders disinterring old bones from their resting place under the chancel\* so they can publicly desecrate the long-dead Bible translator and preacher of the Gospel of Grace? What other evidence do we need that the Roman Catholic Church is apostate? After the remains of Wycliffe were burned, the ashes were cast into the little river Swift, which flows near the Lutterworth church. The interesting old British historian Thomas Fuller saw in this a far grander vision than the one enjoyed that day by the Catholic authorities that carried out the dastardly deed: "To Lutterworth they come, Sumner, Commissarie, Official, Chancellour, Proctors, Doctors, and the Servants ... take, what was left, out of the grave, and burnt them to ashes, and cast them into Swift a Neighbouring Brook running hard by. Thus this Brook hath conveyed his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow Seas; they, into the main Ocean. And thus the Ashes of Wickliff are the Emblem of his Doctrine, which now, is dispersed all the World over." [\* H.C. Conant said Wycliffe had been buried under the chancel. *Popular History*, p. 64.]

## **The Influence of Wycliffe and the Lollards and their Persecution**

The Word of God was preached in England in a dark day and many came to the light and were saved. The record of this is largely unwritten and that which was written was largely destroyed, but it can be found in Heaven's libraries and God has left enough for our present edification. Some recent histories downplay the influence of the Lollard movement in England, but this is revisionism. In fact, the movement was large and influential. Henry Hargreaves observes: "Reading them [Wycliffe Scriptures] together in small groups, as the evidence at trials shows that they did, they were in danger of prosecution and even death, but read them they did, and the small and secret Bible-readings and meetings that they conducted proved a fertile breeding-ground for that Puritanism or nonconformity that has never since died out" (Hargreaves, "The Wycliffite Versions," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, edited by G.H. Lampe, vol. II, "The West from the Fathers to the Reformation," 1969, pp. 414-15). David Daniell adds: "The heart of Lollardy was its English Bible, only now at the start of the twenty-first century, beginning to be understood in some quarters as the massive, careful, complex, always developing achievement that it was" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 90).

1. After Wycliffe's death the Lollards and other dissident believers continued to preach the Word of God and congregate together in fellowships to the extent possible under those circumstances.

- a. The term "Lollard," like the terms "Waldensian" and "Albigensian" and "Paulician,"



was a catchall word that encompassed a wide variety of Christians who were opposed to Roman Catholic doctrine.

- b. While there were Lollards who were pedobaptists and still held to some of Rome's errors, others progressed farther in their spiritual understanding and were immersionists. This fact is commonly overlooked or denied by Protestant (and even some Baptist) historians today, but the evidence is clear. Following are three witnesses to the baptistic Lollards:

- (1) Historian John Foxe says one of the articles of faith among the Lollards was "that faith ought to precede baptism." It is impossible to fit infant baptism into this principle, as an infant is incapable of exercising faith.
- (2) In his history of the Puritans, Daniel Neal says, "That the denial of the right of infants to baptism was a principle generally maintained among Lollards, is abundantly confirmed by the historians of those times" (Neal, *The History of the Puritans*, II, 1837, p. 354).
- (3) In a letter dated October 10, 1519, Erasmus gave this description of the Lollards in Bohemia: "... they own no other authority than the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; they believe or own little or nothing of the sacraments of the church; such as come over to their sect, must every one be baptized anew in mere water..." (Thomas Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 1738, I, pp. 14, 15). Thus Erasmus described the Lollards as Anabaptists.

2. The authorities in England persecuted the readers of the Wycliffe Scriptures. "This Bible provoked bitter opposition, and it became necessary for the people to meet in secret to read it, as they often did. Persecution did not begin at once, but it finally became widespread and bitter. Many suffered and it has been said that some, for daring to read the Bible, WERE BURNED WITH COPIES OF IT ABOUT THEIR NECKS" (Paris Marion Simms, *The Bible from the Beginning*, p. 161).

- a. Many laws were passed against Bible believers, such as the following:

- (1) In 1401 the statue *De Heretico comburendo* was passed. This was the first English statute for burning heretics alive (though Bible-believing Christians had been burned before this), and it was not repealed until 1677, or 276 years later.
- (2) The Constitutions of Arundel
  - (a) Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury and a great hater of Wycliffe and his English Bible, called a Council at Oxford in 1407 "aiming to control preachers, books and the universities" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 75)

- (b) In 1408 the Council passed a number of laws toward this end. Called the *Constitutions of Arundel*, they were ratified later at St. Paul's Cathedral in London.
  - (c) Article 7 made it illegal to translate or read the Scriptures in the English language without express permission of the Catholic authorities. The *Constitutions of Arundel* made this brash demand: "WE THEREFORE DECREE AND ORDAIN THAT NO MAN SHALL, HEREAFTER, BY HIS OWN AUTHORITY, TRANSLATE ANY TEXT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE INTO THE ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGE by way of a book, pamphlet or tract, and that no book, pamphlet or tract of this kind be read, either recently composed at the time of the said John Wyclif, or since then, or that in future may be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privily, under pain of the greater excommunication, until the said translation be allowed by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial" (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 1911, pp. 80-81)).
  - (d) In effect this was a complete ban against the translation or reading of the translated Scripture on the part of all English citizens, because no approval by a bishop or council was ever known to have been given for this activity.
  - (e) Articles 6, 9, 10, and 11 further (1) required that the views of theological students be examined on a monthly basis; (2) forbade any preaching without a license (which was granted only after finding that the preacher was orthodox in his Catholic views); (3) forbade preachers or schoolmasters to discuss the sins of the clergy or the sacraments; (4) forbade all arguments over matters of faith outside of the universities.
  - (f) Arundel's Constitutions remained in force for one hundred and twenty-one years, until 1529.
  - (g) Under this law diligent search was made by the authorities for copies of forbidden literature and much of it was destroyed.
- (3) At another Convocation of bishops at Oxford in March 1411, a list was presented of 267 heresies and errors extracted from Wycliffe's books (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 76). His books were burned at that time at Oxford in the presence of the University Chancellor and again in January 1413 at St. Paul's in London.
- (4) In 1414 the legislature under King Henry V (1413-22) joined in asking for harder measures against the Lollards.
- (a) "After a suspected rising of the Lollards, a law was passed, declaring that ALL WHO READ THE SCRIPTURES IN THE MOTHER TONGUE SHOULD 'FORFEIT LAND, CATEL, LIF, AND GOODS, FROM THEYR HEYRES [THEIR HEIRS] FOR EVER'" (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 89).

- (b) The “English sheriffs were forced to take an oath to persecute the Lollards, and the justices must deliver a relapsed heretic to be burned within ten days of his accusation. ... No mercy was shown under any circumstances” (Thomas Armitage, *A History of the Baptists*, 1890, I, pp. 323, 325).
- b. Many of the Lollards were burned alive for their faith in the 1400s. Following are a few examples. In our *Advanced Bible Studies* course on Church History we list about 40 that were burned in the 15th century, but there were probably many more. Much of the record has not survived. Following are some examples:
- (1) The first religious dissident burned to death after Wycliffe’s death was William Sawtree (Sautre), who was martyred in 1400. He was condemned as a heretic by Archbishop Thomas Arundel and ordered to be burned by King Henry IV. Two of his “heresies” were these: “That every priest and deacon is more bound to preach the word of GOD, than to say the canonical hours” and “that after the pronouncing of the sacramental words, the bread remaineth of the same nature that it was before.”
  - (2) In 1409 a tailor named John Badbe was burned alive in a barrel (John Eadie, *The English Bible*, 1876, I, p. 87; Cushing Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, pp. 465, 66). Badbe was convicted as a heretic for believing “that the sacrament of the body of Christ, consecrated by the priest upon the altar, is not the true body of Christ, by virtue of the words of the sacrament; but that after the sacramental words spoken by the priests, the material bread does remain upon the altar.” When questioned about his faith, Badbe replied, “That if every host, consecrated at the altar, were the Lord’s body, then there were 20,000 gods in England; but he believed in one God Omnipotent.” Badbe was taken to Smithfield in London and “there, being put into an empty barrel, was bound with iron chains fastened to a stake, having dry wood put about him. As he was standing thus, it happened that the prince, the king’s eldest son, was there present; who, to save his life, counseled him, that he should speedily these dangerous opinions. Also Courtney, at that time chan-cellor of Oxford, informed him of the faith of holy church. In the mean season the prior of St. Bartholo-mew’s, in Smithfield, with all solemnity, brought the sacrament, with twelve torches borne before it, and so showed it to the poor man at the stake. Then demanding of him, how he believed in it? He answered, ‘That he knew well it was hallowed bread, and not God’s body.’ Hereupon the fire was put to him. When he felt the fire, he cried, ‘Mercy!’ (calling upon the Lord,) and so the prince immediately commanded to take away the tun, and quench the fire. The prince (his commandment being done,) asked him, if he would forsake heresy, and turn to the faith of holy church? Which thing if he would do, he should have goods enough; promising him also a yearly stipend out of the king’s treasury. But this valiant champion of

Christ, neglecting the prince's fair words, refused the offer of worldly promises, being more vehemently inflamed with the Spirit of God, than with any earthly desire. Whereupon the prince commanded him straight to be put again into the fire, and that he should not afterward look for any grace or favor. But as he could be allured by no rewards, so was he affrighted at no torments, but persevered invincible to the end" (Foxe).

- (3) Thomas Bagley was burned at Smithfield in 1430. He had stated that if a priest made the consecrated wafer into God, he made a God that can be eaten by rats and mice. For expressing such biblical common sense, he was put to death.
- (4) At Christmas time in 1417, Sir John Oldcastle was roasted alive for his faith in the Word of God and his rejection of Rome's authority (under the false charge of treason). Oldcastle was the Lord of Cobham, a famous and fearless knight, and a favorite of King Henry IV. He loved John Wycliffe and the Wycliffe doctrine and often stood by Wycliffe or other Lollard preachers in his armor to protect them. Oldcastle used his position to shield Lollard preachers, and he used his wealth to have copies of the Wycliffe Scriptures made for distribution. In spite of his open rejection of Roman Catholicism, Oldcastle was shielded by King Henry IV until his death in 1413, at which time Oldcastle's Romanist enemies connived to destroy him. They falsely charged Oldcastle with plotting a rebellion against the new king and had him arrested and condemned to die as a traitor and a heretic. Brought to the place of punishment a few days before Christmas 1417, "having a cheerful countenance," it was evident that the old warrior still carried a burden for the souls of the people. Prior to his brutal execution, he warned the people to obey the Holy Bible and to beware of false teachers, whose lives are contrary to Christ. He refused to allow a Catholic priest to minister to him, boldly declaring, instead, that he would confess his sins "to God only." Falling down on his knees, he prayed that God would forgive his persecutors. This man, who had loved the Word of God and had caused it to be distributed among the people, was hung in chains and suspended over the fire to be roasted alive. As this barbarous execution proceeded, the hateful priests and monks reviled and cursed the poor man and did their best to prevent the people from praying for him. It was to no avail. The people loved the godly knight and they wept and prayed with him and for him. The last words which were heard before his voice was drowned by the roaring flames were "Praise God!" John Oldcastle has been depicted in many church histories as a traitor because that was what he was charged with, but from what we read in the ancient records, including John Foxe, we salute him as a victorious soldier of Jesus Christ and look forward to meeting him in Glory.
- (5) John Goose was burned at Tower Hill in 1474. He had been arrested and had abjured ten years earlier, but he repented of his abjuration and continued in the

truth, sealing his confession with his life's blood. After Goose's final arrest, a sheriff in London, Robert Billesdon, took the condemned man to his home to plead with him to repent of his "errors." The steadfast believer refused and requested something to eat, saying "I eat now a good and competent dinner, for I shall pass a little sharp shower ere I go to supper." Thus, he was planning to eat his supper in Heaven, but before that, he had to go through the fire, which he described as "a little sharp shower." After he finished his meal, John Goose asked to be taken to the execution.

- (6) In 1494, 80-year-old Joan Boughton was burned to death at Smithfield. She was charged with holding eight heretical opinions derived from Wycliffe. Joan's daughter, Lady Young, widow of Sir John Young, a mayor of London, was also burned at the stake. She had accepted Christ and apostolic doctrine, but her husband remained a Catholic.

c. Many others suffered imprisonment in the Lollard's Tower and other places.

- (1) The Tower was located in Lambeth Palace, the London headquarters of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It faces the River Thames, across from the Parliament and Westminster Abby.
- (2) It was made into a prison in the early 15th century by Archbishop Henry Chichele.
- (3) Those imprisoned in the Tower were shackled in chains. The rings for the shackles could still be seen in the early 20th century.
- (4) In one three-year period (1428-31) 120 persons were imprisoned for Lollardy.
- (5) The Lollard's Tower was bombed on May 10, 1941, during World War II, and was "completely gutted." It has been rebuilt and today it houses apartments. When we had a private tour of Lambeth Palace in March 2003, our guide told us that she did not know what, if anything, still remains of the prison room. There is a photo in the official Lambeth Palace guide book that appears possibly to have been taken after World War II and that shows a corner of the prison room with the rings in the walls (*Lambeth Palace*, Warners Midlands PLC: 1998, p. 11).

d. Many Lollards were branded and otherwise marked.

- (1) Many were marked for life as "heretics" by branding on the cheeks. "Their necks were tied fast to a post with towels, and their hands holden, that they might not stir; and so the hot iron was put to their cheeks. It is not certain whether branded with L for Lollard, or H for heretic, or whether it was only a formless print of iron" (Thomas Fuller, *Church History*, I, p. 164).

- (2) Others were forced to wear special clothes. Some were forced to wear a depiction of a fiery torch on their clothes during the rest of their lives as a reminder “that they deserved burning” and as a continual warning to others of the potential price of standing upon the Bible and rejecting Roman Catholic authority. To go into the public without this garment or with it covered meant death. “And, indeed, to poor people it was true,--put it off, and be burned; keep it on, and be starved: seeing none generally would set them on work that carried that badge about them” (Benjamin Evans, *Early English Baptists*, 1862, I, p. 23, f1).

e. The Scriptures were confiscated and burned

- (1) In 1410 about 200 copies of Wycliffe’s writings were publicly burned at Oxford, and that was only one occasion.
- (2) So many of the Wycliffe Bibles were destroyed that only about 20 copies of the Old Testament and 90 of the New Testament have survived of the 1380s edition (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 66). A total of about 250 Wycliffe manuscripts have survived altogether, in spite of the fact that they were reproduced widely over a period of more than 140 years prior to the printing of the Tyndale New Testament.
- (3) The Forbidden Book -- “The Bible was worth more than life itself to many of these ancient Christians, and so it is today to those who understand its true value. The forbidden book was often read by night, and those who had not been themselves educated listened with eagerness to the reading of others; but to read it, and to hear it read, were alike forbidden. Copies of the New Testament were also borrowed from hand to hand through a wide circle, and poor people gathered their pennies and formed copartneries for the purchase of the sacred volume. Those who could afford it gave five marks for the coveted manuscript (a very large amount of money in that day), and others in their penury gave gladly for a few leaves of St. Peter and St. Paul a load of hay. ... Some committed portions to memory, that they might recite them to relatives and friends. Thus Alice Colins was commonly sent for to the meetings, ‘to recite unto them the Ten Commandments and the Epistles of Peter and James.’ ... In 1429 Margery Backster was indicted because she asked her maid Joan to ‘come and hear her husband read the law of Christ out of a book he was wont to read by night.’ ... The means employed to discover the readers and possessors of Scripture were truly execrable in character. Friends and relations were put on oath, and bound to say what they knew of their own kindred. The privacy of the household was violated through this espionage; and husband and wife, parent and child, were sworn against one another. The ties of blood were wronged, and the confidence of friendship was turned into a snare in this secret service. Universal suspicion

must have been created; no one could tell who his accuser might be, for the friend to whom he had read of Christ's betrayal might soon be tempted to act the part of Judas towards himself, and for some paltry consideration sell his life to the ecclesiastical powers" (John Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, pp. 91, 92, 93).

(4) The story of the Scots Bible is an example of how the Wycliffe Bible had to be read in secret and in fear.

- (a) Murdoch Nisbet was a farmer of Hardhill in Ayrshire, which was a center of Lollardy. He possessed a Wycliffe Bible and in 1520 determined to make his own translation into Scots. He dug a vault below his farmhouse so that he could accomplish this work in secret away from the prying eyes of the persecuting authorities.
- (b) His manuscript was carefully preserved by his descendants through vicious persecution by the Scottish government that lasted well into the 17th century.
- (c) In 1893 this Scots Bible was purchased by the British Museum and it resides today in the British Library.
- (d) "Scots, the language of Robert Burns, did not survive ... but the story of Nisbet's making his New Testament is a demonstration of the passionate dedication of communities to Wycliffite Bible translations" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 106).

f. The persecutions continued right up to William Tyndale's day in the 16th century. The Lollard believers continued to be imprisoned, persecuted, and burned. In the *Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies* course on Church History we list 99 Christians who were burned for their faith in England between 1500 and 1532, and many others were imprisoned, beaten, and otherwise tormented.

g. Because of the bitter persecution in England following Wycliffe's death, multitudes of Christians were forced into exile, fleeing to the wilds of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, to Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Bohemia. As they moved from place to place, they carried with them the precious words of eternal life and in this manner the outlawed Scriptures spread even in the face of bitter persecution.

3. The preaching of the Word of God prepared the way for the Reformation in England and elsewhere. The groups of Christians who established their faith and practice upon the Wycliffe Bible continued to exist until the formation of the Church of England. The doctrine of the Lollards was still being proclaimed in England in 1529. The royal proclamation that year called upon the authorities to "destroy all heresies and errors commonly called Lollardies." As late as 1546, well into the Protestant Reformation, another proclamation by the English authorities forbidding the possession of Scriptures also mentioned the writings of Wycliffe.

4. John Wycliffe has been called the “MORNINGSTAR OF THE REFORMATION,” but it was actually his Bible that fulfilled that role.

## **THE TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Tyndale New Testament of 1525 was the first English translation based on Greek and the first English New Testament to be printed. The Wycliffe Bible was based on Latin and published only in hand-written manuscripts. The King James Bible is an edition of Tyndale’s masterly translation.

William Tyndale (c. 1494-1536) is therefore the most important name in the history of the English Bible and one of most important names in the history of the English people. And yet on a trip to England in 2003, I found that practically no one there knows who the man is.

### **Tyndale’s Times**

1. Tyndale was born to a time of great change and turmoil. It was a time of international travel and discovery. When he was a boy Columbus discovered America and Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to India, and the great era of world exploration had begun.

2. It was also a time of great persecution.

- a. Shortly before Tyndale was born the Spanish Inquisition was established, and by the time Tyndale was a teenager, 8,800 had been burned to death and 90,000 imprisoned under the pope’s Inquisitor General in Spain, Thomas de Torquemada.
- b. As Tyndale grew to manhood, terrible persecutions were being poured out upon the Christians in Bohemia and Moravia and against the Waldensians in Italy and France. For example, when Tyndale was four, an army of 18,000 Catholics made war against the Waldensian Christians of Piedmont in Northern Italy, destroying entire towns and villages.

3. It was a time for printing.

- a. In 1453, a mere four decades before Tyndale was born, Constantinople was overrun by the Muslims and the Greek scholars had fled to Western Europe with their valuable manuscripts, including copies of the Byzantine Greek New Testament, which had been preserved for 1,000 years through the Dark Ages.
- b. The first book on movable type, a Latin Bible, had been printed in 1456.
- c. By Tyndale’s birth printing presses had been set up in London and in more than 120 cities of Europe.



- d. Bibles in the common languages of the people had begun to be printed in 1488 with the publication of the Bohemian Bible, just a few years before Tyndale was born.
4. It was a time when England was still greatly bowed down by Roman Catholicism.
- a. Catholicism was the state religion, and in those days, England was heavily taxed by Rome. In 1376 the English Parliament noted that the taxes paid in England to Rome amounted to five times as much as those levied by the king (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, 1886, p. 457).
  - b. The citizens of England were largely given over to idolatry, honoring the mass wafer as god and worshipping Catholic images that were set up at famous pilgrimage sites such as Our Lady of Walsingham and St. Anne of Buxton. Another image, the Rood of Grace at Boxley in Kent, was cleverly rigged to impress the worshippers by bowing its head, rolling its eyes, smiling and frowning! The people journeyed to these sites, kissed the feet of the idols, burned candles before them, and made offerings of money.
  - c. The Catholic priests controlled the people's lives from cradle to grave, claiming the power to save infants through their baptism, to prepare souls for death through extreme unction, and to redeem souls from purgatory through their masses.
  - d. Salvation was a commodity to be bought and sold. "The people relied 'on the merit of their own works' toward their justification, such as pilgrimages to images, kneeling, kissing, and cursing of them, as well as many other hypocritical works in their store of religion; there being marts or markets of merits, full of holy relics, images, shrines, and works of superstition, ready to be sold; and all things they had were called holy: holy cowls, holy girdles, holy pardons, holy beads, holy shoes, holy rules" (Evans, *Early English Baptists*, I, 1862, p. 28).
  - e. The hypocrisy of the ecclesiastical leaders was great. "Decency was thrown aside, and morality unknown. Brothels were kept in London for the especial use of the priesthood. The confessional was abused, and profligacy was all but universal" (Evans, pp. 28, 29).
  - f. The intellectual and moral state of the people under such conditions was almost beyond conception. "Ignorance, vice, and immorality of the worst kind, reigned all but universally" (Evans, p. 33).
  - g. The Catholic authorities forbade the translation and distribution of the Bible in English.

- (1) The priests declared it to be heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English (Eadie, *History of the English Bible*, I, p. 81).
  - (2) A Catholic authority, Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, complained that to translate the Scriptures into English and thus lay it “open to the laity and to women who could read” was casting the Gospel pearl under the feet of swine. This was what Rome thought of providing the common man with the Word of God.
  - (3) By Tyndale’s day, it was still a crime to translate or read the Bible in one’s mother tongue. This dated from Arundel’s *Constitution* which was passed in 1408.
- h. The Popes of Tyndale’s day were very powerful and very wicked.
- (1) Sixtus IV (1471-1484) established houses of prostitution in Rome.
  - (2) Innocent VIII (1484-1492) had seven illegitimate children, whom he enriched from the church treasures.
  - (3) Alexander VI (1492-1503) lived with a Spanish lady and her daughter, and reveled in the grossest forms of debauchery. “The accounts of some of the indecent orgies that took place in the presence of the pope and [his daughter] Lucrezia are too bestial for repetition” (William Kerr, *A Handbook on the Papacy*, pp. 228, 29). This pope had five children, and his favorite son, Caesar Borgia, murdered his brother and his brother-in-law.
  - (4) Just a few years before Tyndale’s birth, work had begun on the fabulous St. Peter’s Basilica and parts of the 1,000-room Vatican palace, under the reign of Pope Nicholas V. The Pope was selling indulgences to pay for the extravagant project. An indulgence was a promise of the “remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins” and it is imparted by the Pope from “the treasure of Christ and the saints.”

### **In spite of Rome’s dominion over England, there were Bible-believers**

1. There were Waldenses, Lollards, and other dissident believers in England prior to and during the days of John Wycliffe (1324-1384), the man who gave England her first Bible. We have seen this in the studies on Wycliffe’s life.
2. This Bible movement in England stemming from before the days of Wycliffe lasted until the time of Tyndale and laid the groundwork for the Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries. “In spite of the opposition, however, Lollardy made the Bible familiar to the people of England in

their mother tongue” (Hassell, *History of the Church of God*, p. 466).

(For more about the Lollards and the Waldenses see the Way of Life Advanced Bible Studies course on Church History, which is available from Way of Life Literature, <http://www.wayoflife.org>, 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org).)

## **William Tyndale’s Early Life**

1. William Tyndale was born sometime between 1484 to 1494, the exact date not being known. Many older histories have c. 1484, while most newer ones have c. 1494.

2. His family was well to do and was involved in the cloth or wool business. Some of the branches of the Tyndale family had adopted the name Hitchens or Hutchens or Hychyns, and William Tyndale was also known by this name. His Oxford records have William Hychyns.

a. William had three brothers, two older (Richard and Edward) and one younger (John). Edward was “a considerable figure in the country” and was the Crown Steward for the Berkeley estate (Daniell, pp. 140, 141).

b. Many Tyndale women were daughters and heirs of knights. Another William Tyndale married a niece to the King of Bohemia, and their son, also William, was invited to become the king of Bohemia (though he declined).

3. Tyndale was born in the Cotswold area of Gloucestershire in western England toward Wales, “probably in one of the villages near Dursley (possibly Stinchcombe)” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 140).

a. This is a lovely area of rolling hills covered with sheep pastures and forests, with bubbling streams and gentle flowing rivers. Even today the area is rural and quaint, and many of the houses are ancient, and it is not difficult to imagine what it was like in Tyndale’s day.

b. This was a place filled with Lollard and Waldensian teaching, and it is probable that the Tyndales were influenced. We know that by the time William Tyndale arrived at college, or soon thereafter, he had faith in Christ.

c. The Severn River which runs through this area is the depository of the River Avon, which in turn is the depository of the little River Swift. The latter is the river that runs near the Lutterworth church into which the ashes of John Wycliffe’s bones were thrown in 1431 after they were disinterred and burned by the Roman Catholic authorities.

## Tyndale's Education and Life's Goal

1. Tyndale had a good education.

a. He attended Magdalen College in 1506.

(1) Magdalen was one of the dozen colleges that made up Oxford University at that time.

(2) Tyndale was a brilliant student and obtained a BA in July 1512 and an MA in July 1515. He mastered eight languages and had partial knowledge of others, including Welsh. He was so skilled in these languages, "that whichever he might be speaking, you would think it to be his native tongue." "He was later praised by the German scholar Hermann Buschius for his mastery of eight languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English and French, as well as German, which he seems to have been speaking when he met him" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

(3) Oxford University was then steeped in paganism and Romanism. No theology was studied until after the MA. Tyndale later testified that "in the universities they have ordained that no man shall look in the Scripture until he be nursed in heathen learning eight or nine years and armed with false principles with which he is clean shut out of the understanding of scripture."

b. After Oxford, Tyndale went to Cambridge for a short time (according to John Foxe). It is possible that Tyndale studied under Richard Croke, who returned to Cambridge from Germany to lecture on Greek in 1518. Erasmus had been in England from 1509-14 and had taught Greek at Cambridge part of that time.

2. Tyndale was probably ordained to the priesthood at St. Bartholomew the Great Church which is entered from Smithfield in London. The arched west entrance into the church, called the Smithfield Gate (c. 1300) can be seen in drawings of ancient martyrdoms. The church was built in the 12th century and became Anglican under Queen Elizabeth I.

3. Tyndale was converted to Christ either before or during his student years.

a. Foxe tells us that while there "he read privately to some of the students and fellows of Magdalen college, in divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the scriptures; and all that knew him reputed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition, and of unspotted life" (Foxe, abridged, 1830, p. 252).

b. At Cambridge Tyndale enjoyed fellowship with certain student friends who shared his faith in Christ, chiefly Thomas Bilney and John Fryth. At Cambridge "these

three young men associated themselves together, and strengthened each other's hands in the work of reading the New Testament and preaching the Gospel of repentance to their fellow students" (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, 1881, p. 96). Fryth was led to Christ by Tyndale, and Bilney was saved through reading the Erasmus Greek New Testament.

4. The historian John Foxe tells us that Tyndale was "singularly addicted to the study of the Scriptures."

- a. He yearned to see the Scriptures translated into English directly from the original Hebrew and Greek and to see the English Bible printed and made available to the common man. He knew that this was the only spiritual hope for England.
- b. The Greek New Testament had been printed in 1516 soon after Tyndale graduated from Oxford, and it was translated and published in German by Martin Luther in 1522, when Tyndale was living at Little Sodbury and starting work on his English translation.

5. Upon leaving Cambridge in about 1521, Tyndale got a job as a tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh and family chaplain at **LITTLE SODBURY MANOR** in the lovely Cotswold's region of western England. He resided there for almost two years. It is a beautiful rural area with grass- and tree-covered rolling hills. It is sheep country.

- a. The wealthy, well-connected Walshes (John and Anne) were friends with Tyndale's influential brothers Edward and John.

(1) John Walsh was twice High Sheriff and had spent time at the king's court.

(2) King Henry VIII spent a night at Little Sodbury with his second wife, Anne Boleyn.

- b. Tyndale did some translation work at Little Sodbury and it is probable that he started work on the translation of the English Bible here.

(1) Tyndale's students were very young and he doubtless had much time for study. It is thought that he lived in the attic room, which would have been a quiet retreat. (I saw this room on a visit to Little Sodbury Manor in March 2003. Some parts of the ancient manor are still in much the same condition as they were in Tyndale's day a half millennium earlier. The Great Room, for example, has the same ceiling and fireplace and the large wooden table might be the same one that was in the house when Tyndale lived there. The current owner of Little Sodbury Manor graciously allowed us to take photos of the Great Room. It is here that

Tyndale had discussions over dinner with visiting Catholic priests and prelates. It is perhaps in this room that the famous discussion was carried on, in which a priest said, “We only need the pope’s laws,” and Tyndale replied that he defied the pope and all his laws and that he intended to make the plowboy to know the Scriptures.)

- (2) While at Little Sodbury Manor Tyndale translated one of the works of Erasmus, the *Christian Soldier’s Manual (Enchiridion Militis Christiani)*. (“His writings Tyndale admired, but saw through the defects in his character” --Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 38).
- c. The English people of Tyndale’s day were bowed under the yoke of Romanism and kept in darkness without the light of the Gospel and of the Scriptures.
- (1) Ordinary people could not read Latin and therefore had no access to the Latin Vulgate.
  - (2) Even the priests were ignorant. During one test of a group of priests in the early 1500s, nine did not know how many commandments were written on stone at Sinai; 33 did not know where these commandments were located in the Bible; and 34 did not know the author of the Lord’s Prayer!
  - (3) The Scriptures in the common languages were not allowed. The law made by Thomas Arundel in 1408 had forbidden the translation of the Scriptures “into English or any other tongue” without permission of the Catholic authorities.
  - (4) What Rome did allow to be translated into English was filled with heresy. The “Mirror of the Life of Christ” by Nicholas Love, which was supposed to contain excerpts from the N.T., actually contained Catholic mythology and exalted Mary above Christ!
- d. While at the Little Sodbury Manor, Tyndale preached the Word of God. We know of two places where he preached.
- (1) He preached in a common place “called Saint Austen’s Green,” which was in front of the Abbey of St. Augustine in Bristol. In 1542 Henry VIII converted the 400-year-old Abbey into the Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, and it remains an Anglican cathedral today. The place where Tyndale preached is called College Green today.
  - (2) He also preached in the St. Adeline’s Church, which was originally located on the ridge above Little Sodbury Manor, with a great view of the land for miles

around. The church building was moved a couple of miles away in the 1800s to its current location. On a visit there in March 2003 a church member showed us around the building. When I asked him if he was born again, he replied in the negative and said that the church does not preach that message today.

e. Tyndale also debated Catholic priests who visited Little Sodbury.

- (1) One thing that he debated was the translation of the Scriptures into English. Many years later Tyndale described the way the Roman Catholic authorities looked upon this work: “Some of the papists say it is impossible to translate the Scriptures into English, some that it is not lawful for the layfolk to have it in the mother-tongue, some that it would make them all heretics” (William Tyndale, preface to *The Five Books of Moses*, cited from Schaff, *Church History*, VI, p. 726).
- (2) One day a priest replied to Tyndale, “We are better without God’s laws than the pope’s.” Hearing that, Tyndale exclaimed: “I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest.”

f. Because of his preaching and his conflicts with the Romanists, Tyndale was called before a tribunal in 1522 and threatened for preaching “heresy.”

- (1) Tyndale later described this scene: “All the priests of the country were present the same day. ... When I came before the Chancellor, he threatened me grievously, and reviled me, and rated me as though I had been a dog; and laid to my charge whereof there could be none accuser brought forth, as their manner is not to bring forth the accuser; and yet, all the Priests of the country were there the same day” (Tyndale’s Prologue to *Genesis*, 1530).
- (2) The Chancellor who persecuted Tyndale was Thomas Parker, who later displayed his unreasonable fury against the truth by digging up the bones of William Tracy and burning them to ashes. This was done in 1531. Tracy had been condemned after his decease “because in his last will he had committed his departing Spirit to God, through Jesus Christ alone, and left no part of his property to the priests, to pray for his soul” (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, 1845, I, pp. 296, 97).
- (3) The Cardinal who had appointed Parker was Thomas Wolsey, who himself had been appointed Cardinal by Pope Leo X, the Pope who persecuted Martin Luther. Thomas Wolsey would continue to persecute God’s people in England throughout his life. Later Wolsey lamented to the Pope that the printing press had made it possible for “ordinary men to read the Scriptures.”

- (4) The Bishop of Worcester, who oversaw the area in which Tyndale was persecuted, was Julio di Medici, who later became Pope Clement VII (1523-1534). As Pope he issued a proclamation condemning the writings of Erasmus.
- g. Because of these experiences, Tyndale came to understand that the people would never make progress in the truth unless they had the Bible in their language: “A thousand books had they rather to be put forth against their abominable doings and doctrine, than that the Scripture should come to light. For as long as they may keep that down, they will so darken the right way with the mist of their sophistry, and so tangle them that either rebuke or despise their abominations, with arguments of philosophy, and with worldly similitudes, and apparent reasons of natural wisdom; and with wresting the Scriptures unto their own purpose, clean contrary unto the process, order, and meaning of the text; and so delude them in descanting upon it with allegories . . . that though thou feel in thine heart, and art sure, how that all is false that they say, yet couldst thou not solve their subtile riddles. WHICH THING ONLY MOVED ME TO TRANSLATE THE NEW TESTAMENT, BECAUSE I HAD PERCEIVED BY EXPERIENCE, HOW THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH THE LAY PEOPLE IN ANY TRUTH, EXCEPT THE SCRIPTURE WERE PLAINLY LAID BEFORE THEIR EYES IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, THAT THEY MIGHT SEE THE PROCESS, ORDER, AND MEANING OF THE TEXT: for else, whatsoever truth is taught them, these enemies of all truth quench it again . . . that is with apparent reasons of sophistry, and traditions of their own making; and partly in juggling with the text, expounding it in such a sense as is impossible to gather of the text itself” (Tyndale, preface to *The Five Books of Moses*). We see that Tyndale’s first rule of Bible interpretation was context.

Thus as a young man Tyndale dedicated his life to the fulfillment of the noble goal of producing an English Bible based on the Hebrew and Greek. To this end he suffered great privations, surrendered up to God the blessing of marriage and a settled family life, wandered from place to place in Europe to avoid the persecuting Roman authorities, all for the objective of endowing the English-speaking people with the eternal Word of God.

## **Tyndale’s Doctrine**

Though there is no evidence that William Tyndale was a Baptist at any point in his life, he was Protestant in doctrine and went even beyond this in some areas. Baptist historian John Christian summarizes these as taken from the 1831 edition of Tyndale’s *Works*:

### **1. What Tyndale believed about the church**

- a. He always translated the word *ecclesia* by the word *congregation* and held to a local conception of a church (Tyndale, *Works*, London, 1831, II, p. 13).



- b. He taught that there are only two offices in the church, pastor and deacon.
- c. He taught that elders should be married men (Tyndale, *Works*, 1831, I, p. 265).
- d. He taught that true churches consist of believers.
- e. He taught that there are no popes or priests in the church but a priesthood of believers. “Peter in the Greek signifieth *a stone* in English. This confession is the rock. Now is Simon ... called Peter, because of his confession. Whosoever then thiswise confesseth of Christ, the same is called Peter. Now is this confession come to all that are true Christians. Then is every Christian man and woman Peter” (Tyndale’s note on Matt. 16:18 in the first printed edition of Matthew).

## 2. What Tyndale believed about baptism and the Lord’s Supper

- a. Baptism does not wash away sin. “It is impossible that the waters of the river should wash our hearts” (Tyndale, *Works*, London, 1831, I, p. 30).
- b. Baptism is “a plunging into the water” (Tyndale, *Works*, I, p. 25).
- c. Baptism, to avail, must be preceded by repentance, faith and confession (Tyndale, *Works*, III, p. 179). This is a denial of infant baptism, as it is impossible for a baby to repent and exercise faith and confession.
- d. Baptism is a memorial that signifies the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. “The plunging into the water SIGNIFIETH that we die and are buried with Christ as concerning the old life of sin which is dead. And the pulling out again SIGNIFIETH that we rise again with Christ in anew life full of the Holy Ghost which shall teach us, and guide us, and work the will of God in us; as thou seest Rom. 6” (Tyndale, “The Obedience of All Degrees Proved by God’s Worde,” imprinted by Wyllyam Copland at London 1561; cited from Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I).
- e. The bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper are memorials only.

## **Tyndale’s Life and Character**

1. We have only one description of Tyndale’s daily habits, and that is what John Foxe wrote about his last years in Antwerp.

“First, he was a man very frugal, and spare of body, a great student, and earnest labourer in the setting forth of the Scriptures of God. He reserved or hallowed to himself two days in the week, which he named his pastime, Monday and Saturday. On

Monday he visited all such poor men and women as were fled out of England, by reason of persecution, into Antwerp, and these, once well understanding their good exercises and qualities, he did very liberally comfort and relieve; and in like manner provided for the sick and diseased persons. On the Saturday, he walked round about the town, seeking every corner and hole, where he suspected any poor person to dwell; and where he found any to be well occupied, and yet over-burdened with children, or else were aged and weak, those also he plentifully relieved. And thus he spent his two days of pastime, as he called them. And truly his alms were very large, and so they might well be; for his exhibition that he had yearly, of the English merchants at Antwerp, when living there, was considerable, and that for the most part he bestowed upon the poor. The rest of the days of the week, he gave wholly to his book, wherein he most diligently travailed. When the Sunday came, then went he to some one merchant's chamber, or other, whither came many other merchants, and unto them would he read some one parcel of Scripture; the which proceeded so fruitfully, sweetly and gently from him, much like to the writing of John the Evangelist, that it was a heavenly comfort and joy to the audience, to hear him read the Scriptures: likewise, after dinner, he spent an hour in the same manner" (Foxye).

2. As a further testimony to Tyndale's life and character we will quote from a letter by his friend John Frith, which he wrote in 1534 to Sir Thomas More: "And Tyndale, I trust, liveth, well content with such a poor Apostle's life, as God gave His Son Christ, and His faithful ministers in this world, which is not sure of so many mites as ye be yearly of pounds; although I am sure that, for his learning and judgment in Scripture, he were more worthy to be promoted than all the Bishops in England. ... And as for his behaviour, it is such, that I am sure no man can reprove him of any sin; howbeit, no man is innocent before God, which beholdeth the heart" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I).

3. As to his fear of God and zeal for the Scriptures and his fear of corrupting them in translation, Tyndale testified in his communication with Sir Thomas More: "For I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience; nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honor, or riches, might be given me."

## **Tyndale's Translation Work**

### **1. Tyndale first attempted to do the Bible translation work in England.**

- a. He left Gloucestershire in 1523 and traveled to London to seek the help of Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of the city. He had a letter of introduction from Sir John Walsh to Sir Henry Guildford, Controller and Master of the Horse for King Henry VIII (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

(1) As we have seen, the *Constitutions* of 1408 forbade translation of the Scriptures

into English. Tyndale was hoping to find protection for the work under the wing of the highest authorities.

- (2) As Tunstall had helped Erasmus with the first edition of Greek N.T., having consulted manuscripts for him, it appears that Tyndale was under the impression that the man might be receptive to the translation of the Bible into English.
  - (3) Tyndale would have met Tunstall in Fulham Palace, the residence of the bishop of London in those days. Today Fulham Palace is a museum located in Bishop's Park by the River Thames. I took photos of it on a research trip in April 2005.
  - (4) Tyndale quickly learned that it was not possible to complete the translation work in England.
    - (a) The authorities were not supportive. Tyndale said, "I understood that not only was there no room in my lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also there was no place to do it in all England."
    - (b) Further, no English printer would dare print a forbidden vernacular Bible.
    - (c) King Henry VIII, who sat on the throne, had been awarded the title *Fidei Defensor* ("Defender of the Faith") by Pope Leo X in 1521 for his rigorous defense of the papacy against Luther and others. (This title is still held by British monarchs, with "F.D." still on all British coins.) Though Henry later broke from the Pope and founded the Church of England in 1534, he held to Catholic doctrine all his life. "Henry continued to defend the principal teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, required all people in England and Wales to adhere to the Roman creed, and was quite willing to put to death men and women who opposed his will by embracing Protestant doctrine" (Sidney Houghton, *Sketches from Church History*, p. 113).
- b. In London, a wealthy businessman, **HUMPHRIE MUNMOUTH**, a dealer in cloth draperies, befriended Tyndale.
- (1) He invited Tyndale to live with him, and Tyndale stayed there for about a year studying and preaching, supported by Munmouth.
  - (2) He helped pay Tyndale's way to Europe in about January 1524. Tyndale could not have known then that he would never see his beloved England again.
  - (3) Munmouth continued to support Tyndale in Europe as he worked on the translation.
- c. During the few months that Tyndale was in London before going to Europe, he preached at St. Dunstan's in the West on Fleet Street. "St. Dunstan's apparently had connections with the growing reform movement, with the Poyntz family and with

merchants in the cloth trade, particularly Humphrey Monmouth..." (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 142).

(1) This is where John Milton printed *Paradise Lost* in 1667.

(2) Today St. Dunstan's is radically ecumenical. Their web site has this information: "Here, alone in the whole of the country, the traditions of the seven major churches of Christendom -- that is the Old Catholics, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Oriental churches, the Lutheran and Reformed Churches and the Holy Roman and Catholic Church -- are honoured in four chapels and three shrines set around the octagonal walls. Designated as a centre of prayer for Christian Unity in 1960, it now plays a major role in fostering good relations with churches outside the Anglican communion."

2. In early 1524 Tyndale left England and settled in Hamburg, Germany, to complete the translation. In May 1525 he traveled to Cologne to carry out the printing.

- a. A Catholic spy named Cochlaeus learned about Tyndale's efforts to contract a first printing of his New Testament in Cologne. Cochlaeus had heard certain whisperings that led him to believe that such a printing in English was ongoing, but he did not know the details. While visiting a printing establishment with the goal of printing something of his own, Cochlaeus heard some of the printers boast about a revolution that might shortly be coming to England. Inviting some of these printers to his lodging, Cochlaeus loosened their tongues with liquor and learned where the 3,000 copies of Tyndale's first edition were being printed and made ready for clandestine transport to England.
- b. Cochlaeus quickly reported this information to the authorities, and they forbade the printers to proceed with the work.
- c. Tyndale was forewarned of this matter and was able to get away with most of the completed sheets of Matthew and escaped by boat up the Rhine River to the city of Worms, where the printing was completed. "A single set of printed sheets to Matthew 22, bound in the nineteenth century, is in the British Library" (Daniell, p. 143).

3. The first edition of the Tyndale New Testament was printed in late 1525 or early 1526 and began to be distributed in England in early 1526. It is probable that 6,000 copies of the first edition were printed in Worms. Martin Luther's friend Spalatin says in his diary: "Buschius told me, that, at Worms, six thousand copies of the New Testament had been printed in English. The work was translated by an Englishman."

- a. The Tyndale New Testament was small, fitting easily into the hand of a grown man, so that it could be concealed. I have examined several copies of the Tyndale New Testament at various libraries. All of the small Scriptures that were copied or printed in the centuries when Rome ruled Europe are readily identifiable as missionary Bibles. The Waldensian and Anabaptist Bibles were also small, allowing preachers to transport them more clandestinely in those dark days when Rome sought to destroy all dissident missionary work. I examined a fascinating little 14th century Waldensian New Testament at Cambridge University Library in April 2005. It was deposited there in the 17th century by Samuel Morland, Oliver Cromwell's ambassador to the Waldenses.
- b. The first Tyndale New Testament contained cross-references and was intended for study.
- c. The original prologue printed at Cologne was not included with the completed New Testament, but was printed later as a doctrinal tract, "The Pathway to Holy Scripture." It had three parts: (1) an explanation of why the Bible should be translated into common languages, (2) an explanation of the law and the gospel, faith and works, (3) and teaching on the sinful nature of man. Following are some excerpts from this tract:
  - (1) *The Bible should be translated into the common tongues of the people*: "... for who is so blind to ask, why light should be showed to them that walk in darkness, where they cannot but stumble, and where to stumble, is the danger of eternal damnation; either so despiteful that he would envy any man (I speak not his brother) so necessary a thing..."
  - (2) *Men are sinful and condemned*: "Yet are we full of the natural poison ... our nature is to do sin, as is the nature of a serpent to sting..."
  - (3) *Salvation is through God's grace and the blood of Christ*: "...when the gospel is preached to us, he openeth our hearts, and giveth us grace to believe and putteth the spirit of Christ in us, and we know him as our father most merciful ... the blood of Christ hath obtained all things for us of God."
  - (4) *Salvation by grace results in self-condemnation and all glory to God*: "With the law he condemneth himself and all his deeds, and giveth all the praise to God."

4. Almost immediately, copies of Tyndale's small treasure began to be smuggled into England from the European continent, hidden in bales of merchandise, and then distributed clandestinely.

- a. The first copies arrived in England in January 1526. It was the dead of winter but this volume was destined to warm many hearts. Condit tells us that the way having been

prepared by the Wycliffe Scriptures, “the people received these newly printed Testaments joyfully, but, from necessity, secretly” (Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, p. 104).

- b. The New Testaments were smuggled inside of bales of cloth, in barrels or casks of wine or oil, in containers of grain, in flour sacks, in the false sides or bottoms of chests, and in other ingenious ways.

5. The Catholic authorities were quick to label Tyndale’s translation heretical and ordered all copies confiscated and burned.

- a. Cardinal Wolsey demanded that a diligent search be made for copies of it in London, Cambridge, and Oxford. Those who were found to have copies were arrested.

- b. On February 11, 1526, the first pile of Scriptures was burned in London, under the approving eye of Cardinal Wolsey. A description of this scene reminds us of the seventeenth chapter of Revelation: “The Cardinal had a scaffold made on the top of the stairs for himself, with six and thirty Abbots, mitred Priors, and Bishops, and he, in his whole pomp, mitred, which [Robert] Barnes [in a sermon] had denounced, sat there enthroned! His Chaplains and Spiritual Doctors, in gowns of damask [SCARLET-colored silk or linen] and satin, and he himself in PURPLE [See Rev. 17:4]! And there was a new pulpit erected on the top of the stairs, for Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester, to preach against Luther and Dr. Barnes; and great baskets full of books, standing before them within the rails, which were commanded, after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northern, (or large crucifix at the north gate of St. Paul’s), there to be burned; and these heretics after the sermon, to go three times round the fire, and cast in their faggots” (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 106).

- c. The Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, was very zealous against Tyndale and his English New Testament. In a proclamation issued on October 24, 1526, he said that this New Testament was created by “many children of iniquity” who were “blinded through extreme wickedness,” and he predicted that if the spread of the New Testament among the people were not stopped “without doubt” it would “contaminate and infect the flock committed unto us, with most deadly poison and heresy.” Tunstall oversaw the burning of Tyndale’s New Testaments on October 27, 1526, at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

- d. Diligent search was made from house to house for copies of the source of this “deadly poison and heresy.” Writing in January 1527, the ambassador of King Henry VIII to the Netherlands said that copies of the Tyndale N.T. were being burned “daily” in England (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 122).

Tunstall's chaplain wrote of "many hundreth burned both here and beyond the sea" (Daniell, p. 144).

- e. Thousands of copies of Tyndale's work were burned. So thorough and fierce were these persecutions, that only two complete copies of the first edition of the Tyndale New Testament exist today of the 3,000-6,000 that were printed. One is at the British Library (lacking only the title page) and one is in the Stuttgart Landesbibliothek (the latter, discovered in 1996, is the only surviving copy containing the title page). Another copy at the St. Paul's Cathedral Library lacks the title page and 70 leaves.
- f. By 1528, the prisons were filled with citizens whose only "crime" was that of reading the New Testament in English.
  - (1) One of those who were arrested was Humphrie Munmouth, the man who had assisted Tyndale.
    - (a) He was imprisoned in the London Tower "on suspicion of heresy" and charged with assisting "those who are translating the Scriptures into English," of "subscribing to the said New Testament," and of "having said that faith alone is sufficient to save a man" (D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, V, p. 386). From this it appears that Munmouth was still assisting Tyndale financially.
    - (b) Munmouth was later released, and when he died in November 1537, he left a large gift for three gospel preachers, refused to leave any of his inheritance for the saying of Catholic masses, and commended his soul unto Christ Jesus, "my Maker and Redeemer, in whom, and by the merits of whose blessed passion, is all my whole trust of clean remission and forgiveness of my sins."
  - (2) Another of those arrested was Tyndale's own brother, John. He was charged with distributing Tyndale's Testaments and books in London and was fined heavily and forced to ride through the city sitting backwards on a horse, with pages from the New Testament pinned to his clothes.
- g. In February 1529, the first religious dissident was burned for importing a copy of Tyndale's New Testament. Thomas Hitton was captured in Kent and charged with preaching and with importing a copy of the Tyndale N.T. He was burned at the stake at Smithfield.
  - (1) In those days, as the name suggests, Smithfield was a large field that was a popular gathering place for commerce and amusement. Many believers were burned here up unto the days of King James I.

- (2) Today a small park marks the place where the English government burned nonconformists. There is a plaque on a wall that mentions this. Smithfield was (and still is) bordered on one side by St. Bartholomew the Great church, where Tyndale was probably ordained. The arched entrance (c. 1300) called the Smithfield Gate, which still exists today, can be seen in ancient martyrologies in the background of some of the old drawings of the Smithfield burnings. In Tyndale's day it was Catholic, but it since Queen Elizabeth I's day it has been Anglican church.
- h. Not being satisfied with the destruction of Tyndale's New Testaments in England itself, Thomas Wolsey and others resolved to search for his books in Europe.
- (1) In February 1526, King Henry VIII and Wolsey addressed letters to various authorities in Antwerp, urging them to pursue and destroy all copies of Tyndale's New Testament.
- (2) Princess Margaret of Antwerp "pointedly commanded her officers to search the country for these books, intending to proceed in all rigour against those whom they found culpable" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 124).
- (3) John Hackett, an agent of the English crown, was instructed to seek out these Scriptures in various cities, and we are told that in this capacity he visited Antwerp, Barrow, Zealand, Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, Louvaine, and elsewhere, all in obedience to Cardinal Wolsey's instructions.
- (4) Printers were threatened, and at least one, Christopher Endhoven, was arrested in Antwerp. He died in a prison in London, his crime having been the printing and shipping of English Bibles.
- (5) Richard Harman and his wife were imprisoned on July 12, 1528. One of the charges was that he had "received books from a German merchant (viz., New Testaments in English without a gloss), and sold them to an English merchant who has had them conveyed to England." They languished in prison for seven months and suffered great harm to their business. (The term "gloss" refers to explanatory notes appended to words or phrases. The glosses commonly added to the Latin Vulgate by the Catholic Church, which claimed to be the only authentic interpreter of Scripture, were for the purpose of encouraging "the faithful" to read Roman doctrine into the text through the process of *isogesis*. The Catholic glosses included myths and quotations from the writings of Augustine, Jerome, and "pope" Gregory "the great.")
- (6) About this time an attempt by the Catholic authorities in England to destroy Tyndale New Testaments backfired and resulted in the publication of even more



copies. A plan was devised to purchase great quantities of the Tyndale New Testament in Europe and destroy them before they entered circulation. Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, already mentioned, played a key role in this. Knowing how eagerly Tunstall yearned to destroy Tyndale's work, an enterprising merchant named Augustine Packington conceived of a plan that would allow Tyndale to pay off his debts while increasing the publication of more New Testaments. After gaining Tyndale's approval of the plan, Packington approached Bishop Tunstall when he was on a visit to Antwerp and offered to sell him an entire printing of Tyndale's New Testaments for a large sum of money. Tunstall fell right into the little "trap." Though that batch of unbound New Testament leaves was destroyed, the money paid by Tunstall ended up in Tyndale's hands so that he was able to pay off his debts and have enough left over to print more even copies than those that were burned! It was one step backwards, but two steps forward. When Tunstall later inquired as to where Tyndale got the money to print so many more New Testaments so quickly, he was told that it was from him!

6. Tyndale settled in Antwerp by 1528 and began work on the Old Testament. He was assisted now by his friend John Frith, who he had led to Christ during his student days at Cambridge. Frith had been forced to flee England in about 1527 because of the persecution.

7. In late 1528, Tyndale sailed to Hamburg and suffered shipwreck on the way. The only authority for this is the second edition of Foxe (1570), and it has often been doubted by historians and biographers; but I see no reason to doubt it. Foxe was writing only a short time after the events, and unless there is clear evidence that he was wrong in some point we see no reason to doubt him. Foxe says Tyndale lost all of his books and writings in the shipwreck. Tyndale lived in Hamburg through most of 1529 in the house of a widow and completed the five books of Moses.

8. After this Tyndale returned to Antwerp, where he lived until his arrest.

### **Tyndale's other Writings**

1. Tyndale wrote many profitable books, including "The Revelation of Antichrist," "The Supplication of Beggars," "The Obedience of a Christian Man," and "How Christian Rulers Ought to Govern."

2. In May 1528 Tyndale published his masterly defense of justification by faith without works entitled A Treatise of Justification by Faith Only, otherwise called, The Parable of the Wicked Mammon. This was a direct assault upon Rome's false gospel. Tyndale taught that good works, though important, must flow from true faith, as fruit comes from a vine. He showed how that an unscriptural Romanist emphasis upon works leads only to superstition.

3. In October 1528, Tyndale published The Obedience of a Christian Man. “Enemies were asserting that the reformers throughout Europe were encouraging sedition and teaching treason. Tyndale wrote to declare for the first time the two fundamental principles of the English reformers: the supreme authority of Scripture in the Church, and the supreme authority of the king in the state. ... Tyndale makes many pages of his book out of Scripture, and he is scolding about the corruptions and superstitions in the [Catholic] Church. ... Contrasted with the New Testament Church and faith, he describes the sufferings of the people at the hands, especially, of monks and friars, though the whole hierarchy, as he sees it, from the pope down, is guilty of ‘selling for money what God in Christ promiseth freely’” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 147).

4. In 1530 Tyndale published The Practice of Prelates: Whether the King’s grace may be separated from his queen because she was his brother’s wife, in which he boldly described the Pope as ivy, which climbs up a tree and gradually saps the strength of the tree and kills it. The tree was the English nation. “Practice” here refers to the older meaning of scheming and trickery. This tract shows Tyndale’s excellent understanding of church history.

- a. Consider an excerpt: “Even so the Bishop of Rome, at the beginning, crope along upon the earth, and every man trod upon him in this world. But as soon as there came a Christian Emperor, he joined himself unto his feet, and kissed them, and crope up a little with begging,—now this privilege, now that,—now this city, now that ... St. Peter’s patrimony,—St. Peter’s rents,—St. Peter’s lands,—St. Peter’s right; to cast a vain fear and superstitiousness into the hearts of men ... And thus, with flattering and feigning, and vain superstition, under the name of St. Peter, he crept up and fastened his roots in the heart of the Emperor; and with his sword climbed up above all his fellows; and brought them under his feet. And as he subdued them with the Emperor’s sword, even so, by subtilty and help of them, after that they were sworn faithful, he climbed above the Emperor and subdued him also; and made him stoop unto his feet, and kiss them another while. Yea, Celestinus crowned the Emperor Henry the Fifth, holding the crown between his feet. And when he had put the crown on, he smote it off with his feet again, saying—that he had might to make emperors and put them down again. ... And as the pope played with the Emperor, so did his branches and his members, the bishops, play in every kingdom, dukedom, and lordship ... And thus,—the Ivy tree hath under his roots, throughout all christendom, in every village, holes for foxes, and nests for unclean birds, in all his branches,—and promiseth unto his disciples all the promotions of the world” (Tyndale, “The Practice of Prelates”).
- b. In light of the boldness and plainness by which William Tyndale exposed Rome’s error, it is no wonder that he was a special target of the same.
- c. In this tract Tyndale argued against Henry VIII’s divorce from his first wife, Catherine. It is also no surprise that Henry hated Tyndale for his writings, which reproved his wicked life and rule. When Henry published an English edition of his

treatise against Martin Luther in 1526, he mentioned William Tyndale as one of the “lewd persons born in this our realm.” They were lewd, in the king’s eyes, “for the translating of the New Testament into English” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 163). Henry said he planned to burn the book and sharply punish its readers. Pope Leo X in Rome was so tickled with Henry’s original Latin treatise in 1521 that he named him *Fidei Defensor* (“Defender of the Faith”). Though Pope Paul III revoked Henry’s title after he broke with Rome, the English parliament restored the title in 1544 at a time when the newly formed Church of England was staunchly Romanist in everything but submission to the Pope. British monarchs still hold this title and FD still appears on British coins, even though the “faith” Henry was defending was Rome’s and the enthusiasm that earned him this title was his zeal to burn Bibles and persecute believers. Though Henry’s successors didn’t burn Bibles, they did burn believers, and that goes for Edward VI, Elizabeth I, and James I. Those who dissented from the Church of England continued to be persecuted under British monarchs until the 18th century.

5. Interestingly, even though Tyndale had opposed Henry’s marriage to ANNE BOLEYN, she loved the Tyndale New Testament and had a keen interest in Tyndale’s writings.

- a. Cardinal Wolsey testified that Anne Boleyn was “tainted by the Lutheran heresy” (D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, V, p. 317). Condit, in his *History of the English Bible*, says that Anne headed up “the New Testament party” in the royal house in England (Blackford Condit, *The History of the English Bible*, 1886, p. 133).
- b. After Tyndale’s New Testament began to be smuggled into England in January 1526, Anne obtained a copy. “Anne Boleyn, notwithstanding her smiling face, often withdrew to her closet at Greenwich or at Hampton Court, to study the gospel. Frank, courageous, and proud, she did not conceal the pleasure she found in such reading; her boldness astonished the courtiers, and exasperated the clergy” (D’Aubigne, V, p. 324).
- c. Before becoming queen, Lady Anne, in 1529, possessed a copy of Tyndale’s *Obedience of a Christian Man*; and a very interesting thing happened in connection with this book.
  - (1) We must remember that to own such a book in England at that time was illegal and dangerous. Consider one of the “heretical” statements made in the book: “If thou believe the promises, then God’s truth justifieth thee; that is, forgiveth thy sins and sealeth thee with his Holy Spirit.” This is the priceless Bible doctrine of justification by faith.

- (2) Cardinal Wolsey had ordered the members of the royal court to be on the lookout for “heretical” books.
  - (3) Ignoring these instructions, Anne had lent the book to one of her female attendants, who was found reading it by her suitor, George Zouch, one of the men in the royal household. He playfully snatched the book away and refused to give it back. After he began to read it, he became fascinated by it and soon thereafter he was reading it during a sermon at the royal chapel. The dean of the chapel confiscated the book and delivered it to Cardinal Wolsey.
  - (4) In the mean time, Lady Anne, learning of the loss, approached the king, desiring his help in retrieving the book. A short while after Anne left the royal apartment Wolsey approached the king about the matter, hoping perhaps to bring charges against Anne. Henry, though, had determined that Anne was to get her book back, and the matter was closed! Noting the state of the king’s mind on the subject, Wolsey quickly excused himself from the royal quarters.
  - (5) Upon regaining possession of the book, Lady Anne brought it to the king and requested that he read it, and he did so, and even commented to her that it was a good book, commenting, “This book is for me, and all kings, to read.” Thus, we see the hand of God in providing a witness to the haughty king upon the throne. He was maneuvered into reading a sermon by the very man he was persecuting. That the fickle Henry soon changed his mind about Tyndale’s “Obedience of a Christian Man” is to his discredit.
- e. Anne helped many of the Bible believers who were being persecuted. Thomas Crosby describes her as “being a special favourer of the gospel” (Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, I, p. 32). The English historian John Foxe was seventeen years old when Anne was beheaded, and he later interviewed many of her acquaintances. He testified that Anne “without all controversy was a special comforter and aider of all the professors of Christ’s Gospel” (Foxe, unabridged, 1641, II, p. 332).
- (1) In 1534, a year after her coronation, she helped one of the persecuted Bible believers, Richard Harman, to regain his liberty and the possession of his house and business privileges in Antwerp, which had been taken from him five years earlier for his efforts in smuggling New Testaments. Anne Boleyn’s letter to Thomas Crumwell in behalf of this Christian man is still in existence and is evidence of her love for the Word of God.
    - (a) Signed “Anne the Queen,” the letter said: “Trusty and right well beloved, we greet you well. And whereas we be credibly informed that the bearer hereof, RICHARD HERMAN, merchant and citizen of ANTWERP, in Brabant, was, in the time of the late Lord Cardinal, put and expelled from his freedom and

fellowship, of and in the English house there, for nothing else (as he affirmeth,) but only for that he, still like a good Christian man, did both with his goods and policy, to his great hurt and hindrance in this world, **HELP TO THE SETTING FORTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ENGLISH**: We therefore desire and instantly pray you, that, **WITH ALL SPEED AND FAVOUR CONVENIENT, YE WILL CAUSE THIS GOOD AND HONEST MERCHANT, BEING MY LORD'S TRUE, FAITHFUL, AND LOVING SUBJECT, TO BE RESTORED TO HIS PRISTINE FREEDOM, LIBERTY, AND FELLOWSHIP**, aforesaid, and the sooner at this our request, and at your good leisure to hear him in such things, as he hath to make further relation unto you in this behalf. Given under our signet, at my Lord's manor of Greenwich, the xiiii day of May. To our trust and right well beloved, Thomas Crumwell, Squire, Chief Secretary unto my Lord the King's Highness."

- (b) Christopher Anderson makes a potent observation on this letter: "Whatever may be said, whether to the praise or disparagement of Anne Boleyn, it should not now pass unnoticed that no MAN, either of influence or office in all England, **EVER SO EXPRESSED HIMSELF WHILE TYNDALE LIVED**" (Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 411).
- (2) Anne also helped Thomas Garret, who was one of the first men, if not the first, to distribute the smuggled Tyndale New Testaments in England. Garret had been imprisoned in a foul dungeon at Oxford in 1526. In 1535, Queen Anne attempted to help this man obtain a position that was vacant at the time (Anderson, I, p. 120). (Garret was martyred for his love for the Word of God in 1540, four years after Anne Boleyn's death.)
- (3) Anne also rescued some Englishmen who had been consigned by the Inquisition in France to slavery on board the galley ships. This is described by Foxe: "They were put on board the galleys [oar-powered ships], where they were subjected to the absolute control of the most inhuman and barbarous wretches who ever disgraced the human form. The labor of rowing, as performed in the galleys, is described as being the most excessive that can be imagined; and the sufferings of the poor slaves were increased many fold by the scourgings inflicted on them by their savage taskmasters. The recital of their miseries is too horrible to be dwelt upon: we shall therefore pass to that period when the Lord, of his infinite mercy, gave ear to the cries of his afflicted servants, and **GRACIOUSLY RAISED THEM UP A DELIVERER IN ANNE, QUEEN OF ENGLAND**, who, filled with compassion for the unhappy fate of so many of her fellow-protestants, ordered her ambassador at the court of France, to make a spirited remonstrance in their favor, which Louis, whose affairs were then in a very critical situation, was under the necessity of complying with; and he accordingly dispatched orders to all the seaports for the immediate release of every galley slave condemned for

his religion. ... *A deputation of those who had been released by the interposition of queen Anne, waited upon her majesty in London, to return their most grateful thanks, on behalf of themselves and their brethren, for her Christian interference in their favor.* SHE RECEIVED THEM VERY GRACIOUSLY, AND ASSURED THEM THAT SHE DERIVED MORE PLEASURE FROM THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HAVING LESSENED THE MISERIES OF HER FELLOW-PROTESTANTS, THAN FROM THE MOST BRILLIANT EVENTS OF HER REIGN” (Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, one-volume abridged, 1830, pp. 180, 181).

- f. It was “in recognition of her protection to the friends of the New Testament” that William Tyndale, in 1534, had a special copy of his New Testament printed for the Queen (Condit, *History of the English Bible*, p. 133).
  - (1) It was beautifully printed on vellum (made from the skins of lambs or young calves), with illustrations, and bound in blue morocco. The cover contained, in large red letters, the words *ANNA REGINA ANGLIAE* or *ANNE QUEEN OF ENGLAND*. The title page is done in bright red, blue, and gold, and says, “The New Testament. Printed at Antwerp by Martin Emperotive, Anno. MDxxxiiii.”
  - (2) It is very telling that this volume contains no dedication to the Queen. Christopher Anderson observes: “Tyndale was no sycophant. There is no dedication,—no compliment paid, as there never ought to be, to any human being, along with God’s most holy Word.”
  - (3) This invaluable New Testament ended up in the private library of Clayton Cracherode and after his death in 1799 it became the property of the British Museum. Today it resides in the British Library and sometimes it is on display in the John Ritblat Gallary.
- g. Anne had a direct role in Henry VIII’s proclamation in 1535 that the Bible should be printed and deposited in every church. Archbishop Parker, chaplain to the Queen, testified of this: “His royal Majesty was petitioned by the whole Synod, to give commandment that the Holy Scriptures might be translated into the English tongue; for so it could be more easily discerned by all, what was agreeable to the Divine Law. To this, Stephen Gardiner--the King’s most secret counsellor--made resistance as covertly as possible. But *through the grace and intercession of our most illustrious and virtuous mistress the Queen, permission was at length obtained from the King*, that the Holy Scriptures should be printed and deposited in every church, in a place where the people might read them; which grant of the King did not go into effect, because this most illustrious Queen soon after suffered death” (emphasis added) (Strype, *Life and Acts of Parker*, p. 7).

- h. Anne also encouraged Miles Coverdale in his translation of the English Bible. “Before the close of this same year [1535], Coverdale had completed and carried through the press a translation of the whole Bible, *which owed much to her patronage, and was dedicated to her, conjointly with the King*” (emphasis added) (Conant, *Popular History of the English Bible*, p. 282).
- i. When Anne’s son died shortly after childbirth in January 1536, the fickle and cruel monarch connived to have his young wife put to death. He had wooed her and used her and now he would discard her like a piece of trash. She was falsely charged with adultery and beheaded on May 19, 1536, less than five months after miscarrying. At the moment of her execution, just before noon, artillery was fired as a predetermined signal to Henry, who was out in the fields hunting. Those present said he responded thus: “Ah! Ah! It is done; the business is done! Uncouple the dogs, and let us follow the sport!” The very next morning he married Jane Seymoure, with whom he had become infatuated some months earlier (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, III, p. 404; Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, II, p. 69). Having read extensively about the life of Anne Boleyn, I am convinced that Henry disposed of her for two reasons, for his lust toward another woman and for his hatred of the favor she showed toward the “Protestants.”
- j. Anne Boleyn has been much criticized by some historians, and it is certain that she had serious faults; but I believe the old British historian Thomas Fuller was correct when he summarized her life in this way: “In a word, she was a great patroness of the Protestants, protector of the persecuted, preferer of men of merit (among whom Hugh Latimer,) a bountiful reliever of the poor, and the happy mother of queen Elizabeth” (Fuller, *Church History of Britain*, 1837, II, p. 66).

## **Tyndale’s Imprisonment and Death**

1. Tyndale had been hunted the entire time he was in Europe.
  - a. These attempts were increased in 1531, at which time Henry VIII was fiercely desirous of capturing and destroying Tyndale. Various individuals were commissioned to seize the Translator, or to attempt to entice him back to England. “His anxiety to seize the man, or allure him into the kingdom, will be found to harmonise with the growing ferocity of his character” (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, p. 267).
  - b. In spite of these diligent efforts to capture Tyndale, God continued to hide him from his persecutors. His work on earth was not finished, and nothing can destroy the child of God unless and until God allows it.
  - c. An interesting thing occurred in April 1531, four years prior to Tyndale’s arrest.

- (1) Stephen Vaughan, one of the men hired to spy on “heretics” among the English merchants in Europe, was in Antwerp; and Tyndale, learning of this, decided to confront his enemy. He contacted Vaughan by a middleman and requested that Vaughan accompany this man to meet “a certain friend, unknown to the messenger, who is very desirous to speak with you.” Vaughan inquired as to the mystery friend’s name, but he was told that the messenger did not have this information. He agreed to accompany the man, anyway, to satisfy his curiosity.
- (2) One evening soon thereafter Vaughan was brought outside the gates of Antwerp into a field, where he found himself face to face with William Tyndale, the very object of his inquisition. What a surprise this must have been to the king’s agent! Following is the dialogue as recorded by Vaughan himself in a letter to the English authorities:

Tyndale: “Do you not know me?”

Vaughan: “I do not well remember you.”

Tyndale: “My name is Tyndale.”

Vaughan: “But, Tyndale, fortunate be our meeting!”

Tyndale: “Sir, I have been exceedingly desirous to speak with you.”

Vaughan: “And I with you; what is your mind?”

Tyndale: “Sir, I am informed that the King’s Grace taketh great displeasure with me, for putting forth of certain books, which I lately made in these parts; but specially for the book named ‘The Practice of Prelates,’ whereof I have no little marvel,—considering that in it, I did but warn his Grace, of the subtle demeanour of the Clergy of his realm, towards his person; and of the shameful abusions by them practised, not a little threatening the displeasure of his Grace, and weal of his realm: in which doing, I showed and declared the heart of a true subject, which sought the safe-guard of his royal person, and weal of his Commons: to the intent, that his Grace thereof warned, might in due time, prepare his remedies against their subtle dreams. If, for my pains therein taken,—if for MY POVERTY,—if for MINE EXILE out of mine natural country, and BITTER ABSENCE FROM MY FRIENDS,—if FOR MY HUNGER, MY THIRST, MY COLD, THE GREAT DANGER WHEREWITH I AM EVERY WHERE COMPASSED;—and finally, if for INNUMERABLE OTHER HARD AND SHARP FIGHTINGS WHICH I ENDURE, not yet feeling of their asperity, by reason (that) I hoped with my labours, to do honour to God, true service to my Prince, and pleasure to his



Commons;—how is it that his Grace, this considering, may either by himself think, or by the persuasions of others, be brought to think, that in this doing, I should not show a pure mind, a true and incorrupt zeal, and affection to His Grace? ... AGAIN, MAY HIS GRACE, BEING A CHRISTIAN PRINCE, BE SO UNKIND TO GOD, WHICH HATH COMMANDED HIS WORD TO BE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, TO GIVE MORE FAITH TO WICKED PERSUASIONS OF MEN, WHICH PRESUMING ABOVE GOD’S WISDOM, AND CONTRARY TO THAT WHICH CHRIST EXPRESSLY COMMANDETH IN HIS TESTAMENT, DARE SAY, THAT IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR THE PEOPLE TO HAVE THE SAME, IN A TONGUE THAT THEY UNDERSTAND; because the purity thereof should open men’s eyes to see their wickedness? ... As I now am, very death were more pleasant to me than life, considering man’s nature to be such as can bear no truth.”

- (3) Vaughan attempted to persuade Tyndale to return to England, promising him safety, but the Lord gave the man wisdom enough to ignore these entreaties that he might remain free somewhat longer and continue his work.
- (4) At this point Tyndale drew away from Vaughan and departed into the night so as not to be apprehended.
- (5) The king of England ignored Tyndale’s plea to allow the Bible in English to be freely distributed without fear of persecution.

2. The last thing that Tyndale wrote and published prior to his imprisonment was his second address to the Christian reader that was appended to the new edition of his New Testament that was published in 1534:

“Moreover, I take God, which alone seeth the heart, to record to my conscience, beseeching Him that my part be not in the blood of Christ, if I wrote of all that I have written, throughout all my books, aught of an evil purpose, of envy or malice to any man, or to stir up any false doctrine or opinion in the Church of Christ; or to be author of any sect; or to draw disciples after me; or that I would be esteemed, or had in price, above the least child that is born; save only of pity and compassion I had, and yet have, on the blindness of my brethren, and to bring them into the knowledge of Christ; and to make every one of them, if it were possible, as perfect as an angel of heaven; and to weed out all that is not planted of our heavenly Father; and to bring down all that lifteth up itself against the knowledge of the salvation that is in the blood of Christ.

“Also, my part be not in Christ, if mine heart be not to follow and live according as I teach; and also, if mine heart weep not night and day for mine own sin, and other men’s --beseeching God to convert us all, and to take His wrath from us, and to be merciful as

well to all other men, as to mine own soul--caring for the wealth of the realm I was born in, for the King, and all that are thereof, as a tender-hearted mother would do for her only son.

“As concerning all I have translated, or otherwise written, I beseech all men to read it for that purpose I wrote it: even to bring them to the knowledge of the Scripture. And as far as the Scripture approveth it, so far to allow it; and if in any place the Word of God disallow it, then to refuse it, as I do before our Saviour Christ and His congregation. And where they find faults, let them shew it me, if they be nigh, or write to me, if they be far off; or write openly against it and improve it; and I promise them, if I shall perceive that their reasons conclude, I will confess mine ignorance openly.”

3. Tyndale was arrested in May 1535 in Antwerp. By that time he had completed a large portion of the Old Testament (Genesis to 2 Chronicles and the book of Jonah).

a. For about a year prior to May 1535 Tyndale had been staying in the home of an English businessman named Thomas Poyntz, a friend of the Word of God. He was the son of Sir Robert Poyntz of Iron Acton, Gloucestershire, where Tyndale had grown up; and the Lady of Sir John Walsh at Little Sodbury Manor, where Tyndale had been tutor, was from another side of Poyntz family that resided in Essex.

b. A young Catholic man named Henry (also called Harry) Phillips was hired, probably by bishops in England, to snare Tyndale.

(1) Phillips was a scoundrel. Having been entrusted with money by his father to give to someone in London, Phillips had gambled it away. After this he fled abroad and hired himself out to entrap Tyndale.

(2) He had met and befriended the translator, pretending to be a friend of the Reformation and to have an interest in translation. A Catholic Cistercian monk named Gabriel Donne (or Dunne), of Stratford Abbey near London, was posing as Phillips' servant and was probably the actual leader of the little entrapment party. (Some biographers have claimed that Donne did not assume this position of servant to Phillips, but John Foxe, contemporary with those events, said Donne took this position, and Christopher Anderson's research on this, at least in the mind of this writer, is conclusive. Foxe got his information about Tyndale's betrayal directly from Thomas Poyntz, in whose house Tyndale had been staying prior to his arrest. Poyntz was Tyndale's true friend and got himself into deep trouble for trying to help Tyndale after his imprisonment.)

c. Tyndale's arrest happened after this fashion.

- (1) Just hours before the betrayal, the wicked Phillips borrowed forty shillings from Tyndale, knowing he would not have to repay it. Phillips lied to Tyndale, claiming that he had lost his purse during a journey.
  - (2) Phillips invited Tyndale to be his guest for a meal, but the gracious and unsuspecting Bible translator protested that he, instead, would provide the meal at his expense and that Phillips should be his guest.
  - (3) Phillips agreed and at the appointed time when he arrived to meet Tyndale, he had officers stationed outside the house awaiting his signal to arrest the man of God. Phillips met Tyndale at the door and pretended that he was ready to go to dinner. When they left the house, they had to walk down a little pathway to the road. The taller Phillips insisted on walking behind Tyndale, and as they reached the road Phillips pointed down to the Bible translator. This was the prearranged signal for Tyndale to be seized by the officers of Charles V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and a bitter opponent of the Reformation. (Charles V's aunt was the Catherine who had just been cruelly divorced by her husband, England's King Henry VIII!)
- d. Tyndale was first held at Antwerp and then transported about 24 miles away to Vilvoorde, a few miles from Brussels, and imprisoned in the castle there. He was convicted of heresy and condemned to die under the laws of the inquisition.
- (1) The old castle is no longer in existence. It was torn down long ago and some of the stones were used to construct the (now abandoned) prison that stands in its place.
  - (2) On a visit there in March 2003 I saw the site of the old castle. The River Seine, into which Tyndale's ashes were thrown following his execution, is a narrow and polluted body of water that flows in front of the prison. That this is the actual site of the old castle is witnessed by the fact that Castle Street ("Kasteel Straat") dead-ends at the river just across from the prison. The modern bridge over the river is a little ways from this street. There is a small museum in Vilvoorde attached to the oldest Protestant church in the town dedicated to the memory of Tyndale, and it contains a large model of the castle and a near life-size model of a prison room (located one floor beneath the museum and accessed by a small stairway at the back of the main museum room), as well as other treasures such as two old line drawings of the castle and portraits of the two chief persecutors who examined and tried Tyndale. There is also a memorial to Tyndale in Vilvoorde. It is about 12 feet tall and located in a park named Tyndale Park. Carved into the stone monument are the words "To the memory of the Englishman William Tyndale." The plaque on the monument says in four

languages: “William Tyndale who suffered martyrdom under Spanish rule on Oct. 6th 1536, was strangled and burnt at Vilvorde among his last words were these: ‘Lord, open the eyes of the king of England.’ This prayer was answered within a year by the issue under royal authority of the whole Bible in English. This memorial was erected by friends of the Trinitarian Bible Society of London and of the Belgian Bible Society, Oct. 1913.”

4. Tyndale’s friend Thomas Poyntz made a diligent effort to help him, even though he knew that by these actions he was endangering himself.

- a. He wrote letters and spoke to the authorities on Tyndale’s behalf. He neglected his own business for two months, traveling with letters and even crossing over to England to bring the matter before the authorities there. Following is a description of Poyntz’s efforts, which led eventually to his own arrest. This is from d’Aubigne’s *History of the Reformation*:

When Poyntz saw his friend in prison, he resolved to do everything to save him. Poyntz’s elder brother John, who had retired to his estate at North Okendon, in Essex, had accompanied the king in 1520 to the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and although no longer at court, he still enjoyed the favor of Henry VIII. Thomas determined to write to John ... [who] lost no time: he succeeded in interesting Cromwell in the reformer’s cause, and on the 10th of September 1535, a messenger arrived in Antwerp with two letters from the vicar-general -- one for the marquis of Bergen-op-zoom, and the other for Carondelet, archbishop of Palermo and president of the council of Brabant. Alas! the marquis had started two days before for Germany, whither he was conducting the princess of Denmark. Thomas Poyntz mounted his horse, and caught up the escort about fifteen miles from Maestricht. The marquis hurriedly glanced over Cromwell’s dispatch. ‘I have no leisure to write,’ he said; ‘the princess is making ready to depart.’ ‘I will follow you to the next baiting place,’ answered Tyndale’s indefatigable friend. ‘Be it so,’ replied Bergen-op-zoom.

On arriving at Maestricht, the marquis wrote to Flegge, to Cromwell, and to his friend the archbishop, president of the council of Brabant, and gave the three letters to Poyntz. The latter presented the letters of Cromwell and of the marquis to the president, but the archbishop and the council of Brabant were opposed to Tyndale. Poyntz immediately started for London, and laid the answer of the council before Cromwell, entreating him to insist that Tyndale should be immediately set at liberty, for the danger was great. The answer was delayed a month. Poyntz handed it to the chancery of Brabant, and every day this true and generous friend went to the office to learn the result. ‘Your request will be granted,’ said one of the clerks on the fourth day. Poyntz was transported with joy. Tyndale was saved.

The traitor Philips, however, who had delivered him to his enemies, was then at Louvain. He had run away from Antwerp, knowing that the English merchants were angry with him, and had sold his books with the intent of escaping to Paris. But the Louvain priests, who still needed him, reassured him, and remaining in that stronghold of Romanism, he began to translate into Latin such passages in Tyndale's writings as he thought best calculated to offend the Catholics. He was thus occupied when the news of Tyndale's approaching deliverance filled him and his friends with alarm. What was to be done? He thought the only means of preventing the liberation of the prisoner was to shut up the liberator himself. Philips went straight to the procurator-general. 'That man, Poyntz,' he said, 'is as much a heretic as Tyndale.' Two sergeants-at-arms were sent to keep watch over Poyntz at his house, and for six days in succession he was examined upon a hundred different articles. At the beginning of February 1536, he learnt that he was about to be sent to prison, and knowing what would follow, he formed a prompt resolution. One night, when the sergeants-at-arms were asleep, he escaped and left the city early, just as the gates were opened. Horsemen were sent in search of him; but as Poyntz knew the country well, he escaped them, got on board a ship, and arrived safe and sound at his brother's house at North Okendon (J.H. Merle d'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin*).

- b. It is probable that Poyntz's suspicions were correct and that he would have been put to death with Tyndale, because the man responsible for overseeing Poyntz's imprisonment was fined a very large amount of money by the Brussels city council for permitting the escape of "a prisoner accused of Lutheranism."
- c. Poyntz was banished from the Netherlands and lost his goods and his occupation. His wife, a native of Antwerp, refused to join him in England, and for many years he did not see his children. "His business was in ruins; he lived a further twenty-six years, too poor to benefit from the inheritance of the ancestral manor in Essex" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 154). "In a worldly way his life was ruined by his generous championship of Tyndale: but the lustre of his deed is his perpetual possession" (Mozley, *William Tyndale*, p. 319).
- d. The Latin epitaph on Poyntz's grave describes him as a man who had an "ardent profession of evangelical truth."

## 5. What happened to the two men who entrapped Tyndale?

- a. Conspirator Henry Phillips did not prosper from his ill deed. He was later charged with treason against the king of England and was pursued from city to city on this account. In the end he was destitute and friendless. "We take our leave of him,

disowned by his parents, cast aside by his friends, denounced by his country, shunned by the very party for whose sake he had marred his life, mistrusted by all, valued only as a tool, *friendless, homeless, hopeless, destitute, fated to go down to history as the author of one perfidious deed*" (James Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 1937, p. 323). Christopher Anderson adds this: "Reduced to extremities, Phillips begged for money from all parties to assist him to return to Flanders, but, suspected and avoided by all, none would afford him the least aid, till, driven by necessity, he sold his clothes, and is supposed to have entered the army of some one of the powers that were then at war in the south of Europe. No more is heard of him. Thus sunk into oblivion one of the betrayers of our Translator" (*Annals of the English Bible*).

- b. Conspirator Gabriel Donne had dedicated his life to Mary, and after the business in Europe pertaining to Tyndale, he was well rewarded in this life. He returned to England and was appointed Abbot of Buckfastleigh, in Devonshire, by which he received great wealth amounting to a thousand marks a year. He was given a generous retirement. He remained a Catholic and a subject of Mary all his days and there is no evidence that he ever repented of his part in the betrayal of William Tyndale. He died in 1558, was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and went out into eternity to face God.

6. Tyndale was imprisoned in a lonely, inhospitable prison cell for 16 months, which encompassed a full winter.

- a. The long winter was cold and difficult, and the translator was sick. He wrote the following pitiful letter from the prison (discovered in Belgian archives in the 19th century), beseeching an authority to allow him to have some warm clothes:

"I entreat your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me from my goods which he has in his possession, a warmer cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in this cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out, as also are my shirts. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he also has warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a lamp in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark.

"But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study.

“And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always that it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if, before the end of the winter, a different decision be reached concerning me, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart. Amen” (Andrew Edgar, *The Bibles of England*, 1889, pp. 66-69).

- b. During the first months of his imprisonment, Tyndale was challenged by the Catholic authorities and scholars at the University of Louvain, and an extensive discussion was conducted through meetings with Tyndale at the castle and by letter. Foxe says, “There was much writing, and great disputation to and fro, between him and them of the University of Louvain; in such sort, that they all had enough to do, and more than they could well wield, to answer the authorities and testimonies of the Scripture, whereupon he, most pithily, grounded his doctrine.”
  - (1) The procurer-general that headed up Tyndale’s examinations was Pierre Dufief. David Daniell says he was “a magistrate of evil reputation, widely known in the Low Countries for his cruelty.” “His zeal for hunting down heretics was fuelled by the fact that he was given a proportion of the confiscated property of his victims, and a large fee” (*The Bible in English*, p. 154).
  - (2) Tyndale was tried by 17 commissioners, led by three chief accusers, “at their head the greatest heresy-hunter in Europe, Jacobus Latomus, from the new Catholic University of Leuven/Louvain, a long-time opponent of Erasmus as well as Luther” (Daniell, p. 154). That Tyndale would be convicted and condemned by the Inquisition’s kangaroo court was never in doubt.
  - (3) The main things disputed at Tyndale’s examination and trial were the sole authority of the Bible and justification by faith without works. In his account of the trial, which was published in 1550, Latomus said that Tyndale emphasized that “faith alone justifies before God.” Tyndale wrote a book by that title in his defense during the examination and trial.
  - (4) Another thing that Tyndale emphasized was that “the key to the understanding of Scripture is salvation.” Thus Tyndale testified to his accusers that they did not understand the Scripture properly because they were not born again. It will be interesting in eternity to see what fruit that powerful testimony bore among his listeners.
  - (5) Another subject disputed was the translation of the Scripture into the vernacular languages, to which Rome was bitterly opposed.
- c. During his imprisonment, it is said that Tyndale converted the jail keeper, the

keeper's daughter, and other members of his household. The rest that were in the castle, and conversant with Tyndale, reported of him, "that if he were not a good Christian man, they could not tell whom to trust: and the Procurator-General, the Emperor's attorney, being there, left this testimony of him, that he was '*Homo doctus, pius, et bonus*'—a learned, pious, and good man" (Christopher Anderson, *Annals of the English Bible*, I, pp. 517, 18).

- d. Though Tyndale was bound, the Word of God was not. Even during his imprisonment, three editions of his New Testament were printed, as well as editions of some of his books. It is also possible that he continued to work on the English translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, though we have seen that in the winter following his arrest in May he still did not have his Hebrew Bible study tools.

7. On the morning of October 6, 1536, Tyndale was led forth to the place of execution.

- a. He was taken outside the walls of the castle and across the river. "The gates of the prison rolled back, a procession crossed the foss and the bridge, under which slept the waters of the Senne, passed the outward walls, and halted without the fortifications. ... On arriving at the scene of punishment, the reformer found a numerous crowd assembled. The government had wished to show the people the punishment of a heretic, but they only witnessed the triumph of a martyr" (J.H. Merle d'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*).
- b. Tyndale was tied to a stake, strangled, and his body was burned. His suffering was over. For more than 460 years, he has been enjoying his reward in Glory in the presence of his Savior in the most complete comfort imaginable! And yet his earthly labors, sacrifice, and suffering continue to bear sweet fruit in this world.
- c. Tyndale was condemned and burned on the authority of the Roman Catholic clergy. Hall's *Chronicle* of 1548 contained the following information (we have modernized the spelling): "This year in the month of September William Tyndale otherwise called Hitchens was *by the cruelty of the clergy of Louvain* condemned and burned in a town beside Brussels in Brabant called Vilvorde" (cited from Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 172). After riding through Vilvorde in 1550, Roger Ascham, tutor to Princess Elizabeth, wrote that Tyndale was put to death "at the town's end in a notable solemn place of execution..." (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 156).
- d. This statement from Christopher Anderson, a Scottish Baptist who wrote the first extensive biography of Tyndale's life, is fitting: "Standing above all his contemporaries, with only one man by his side, his companion Fryth, he had never temporised, never courted human favour, never compromised or sacrificed one iota of Divine truth; but with his face to the foe, and dying on the shield of faith, he was



called to quit the well-fought field, for his mansion near the throne; to refresh himself, after the dust and turmoil and heat of the day, in the paradise of God, to exchange contention with the votaries of darkness and superstition, for the harmony and the light of heaven; the solitude of his dungeon, for the presence of his Redeemer, in the city of the living God” (*Annals of the English Bible*). [Anderson pastored the English Baptist Church in Edinburgh and was cofounder of the Edinburgh Bible Society and the Baptist Itinerant Society. He was also the home secretary of and raised support for William Carey and his Serampore Mission in India. Anderson spent 14 years writing the *Annals of the English Bible*, which was first published in 1845 in two volumes. His objective at first was to write a biography of William Tyndale and his times but the work expanded in perspective as it progressed.]

8. At his death, Tyndale prayed, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.” Though we have no evidence that Henry VIII was ever converted, we do know that soon after this the Tyndale Bible received official recognition under Henry and Henry’s successor, Edward VI, was a friend of the Reformation.

a. The king was convinced by his Vicar General, Thomas Cromwell, to authorize the printing of the Matthew’s Bible just months after the death of Tyndale.

(1) The Matthew’s Bible (edited anonymously by John Rogers, who, like Tyndale, was martyred for his faith) was at least two-thirds the work of Tyndale.

(2) The Matthew’s Bible even featured a prologue to the book of Romans written by Tyndale.

(3) This Bible also featured the initials of Tyndale nearly two and a half inches high at the end of Malachi.

b. Tyndale’s Bible also gained royal approval under the form of the Great Bible.

(1) It was ordered that a copy of the Great Bible be placed in every parish church in England.

(2) This Bible even appeared at one point with the imprimatur of Cuthbert Tunstall, the same Bishop of London who had condemned Tyndale and consigned his New Testaments to the flame! His imprimatur appeared in editions of the Great Bible in 1541.

(a) After the Vicar General Thomas Cromwell was maligned, falsely charged, and then executed in July 1540 (something which happened regularly with friends and wives of Henry VIII), it was necessary from a political viewpoint

that the names of bishops who had opposed Cromwell appear in the approved Bible rather than the name of Thomas Cranmer, who had been closely aligned with Cromwell.

- (b) Thus it happened that Cuthbert Tunstall was one of the two names that newly appeared on the title page of the Great Bible, which was really the Tyndale Bible, in 1541.

- (3) Thus, by God's sovereign hand, the fickle king authorized the publication of the very Bible he had so hated and persecuted.

9. It is important to understand that Tyndale did not live to see most of the fruit from his labors. He lived and labored by faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). The Scripture that he labored and sacrificed so much to translate was the very source of his faith (Rom. 10:17). "Every one of the thousands of English versions round the world goes back to Tyndale's fundamental work in Worms and Antwerp. His was a dazzling achievement. Of its success he knew nothing. He worked in faith, the existential faith which is the business of getting up and doing it. As he noted in the Prologue to *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, faith in the God of the Bible is huge in its effects" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 156).

## **Tyndale's Influence**

1. William Tyndale's translation was the basis for several revisions, chiefly, the Coverdale Bible, the Matthew's Bible, the Great Bible, the Bishop's Bible, and the Geneva Bible, culminating in the King James Bible of 1611.

2. A large percentage of Tyndale's words remain in the KJV.

- a. In the first epistle of John, nine-tenths of the King James Bible is from Tyndale. In the book of Ephesians, the percentage is five-sixths. "These proportions are maintained throughout the entire New Testament" (Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 251).
- b. In 1998, a computer study was done on 18 carefully selected portions of the Bible, comparing the King James with the Tyndale. The authors of the study were Jon Nielson and Royal Skousen. They concluded that 83% of the King James Bible was contributed by Tyndale (Nielson and Skousen, "How Much of the King James Bible Is William Tyndale's," *Reformation*, 3, 1998, pp. 49-74).
- c. Behind the statistics is that immeasurable feeling that KJV's rhythm, vocabulary and cadence, which can be so exquisite and so direct, has a root in an essence of the English language. The cause of that is Tyndale's genius" (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 448).

- d. Thus, every person who has been blessed by a sound English Bible during the past four and a half centuries owes a large debt to the humble translator who was faithful unto death.

3. Tyndale gave the English people a Bible that is not only accurate but also beautiful. Tyndale was writing for God, first, and for the ploughboy, second, and the result was wonderful. It still has a sweet, clear, powerful feel to it even almost half a millennium later! Much of the short, pithy, powerful language that characterizes the King James Bible can be traced back to William Tyndale. Consider the following example:

“And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Gen. 22:12).

4. The miracle of what Tyndale accomplished is evident by considering the state of the English language in his day. “The work of Tyndale ... was done ... when the English language was a poor thing indeed, almost dead at the bottom of the pond. In 1526, a few local documents were beginning to be expressed in English. The language of government, the professions and religion was Latin: the new humanist Latin was a fine vehicle for any thoughts above the mundane. What English prose there was tried for an ornamented and heavily subordinated wandering line in vocabulary that was partly Saxon, heavily Norman-French, and strongly Latinized. ... Tyndale made for the Bible not only a strong direct short prose line, with Saxon vocabulary in a basic Saxon subject-verb-object syntax, but also showed a range of English styles which, coming out of the 1530s, astonishes the knowledgeable reader. NO ONE ELSE WAS WRITING ENGLISH LIKE THIS IN THE 1530s” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 136).

5. Through his Bible translation, Tyndale standardized the English language and wielded a greater linguistic influence than Shakespeare. “Tyndale gave to English not only a Bible language, but a new prose. England was blessed as a nation in that the language of its principal book, as the Bible in English rapidly became, was the fountain from which flowed the lucidity, suppleness and expressive range of the greatest prose thereafter” (Daniell, *William Tyndale*, p. 116).

6. Countless expressions that are common to the English language were coined by Tyndale, such as “let there be light”; “fight the good fight”; “filthy lucre”; “eat, drink and be merry”; “a prophet has no honor in his own country”; “ye of little faith”; “signs of the times”; “a man after his own heart”; “am I my brother’s keeper”; “a law unto themselves”; “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”; “the powers that be”; “the salt of the earth”; to mention but a few.

7. The Tyndale Bible literally transformed the nation of England. Describing 17th century England, Christopher Hill wrote: “For most men and women the Bible was their point of reference in all their thinking. ... The Bible was the source of virtually all ideas; it supplied the

idiom in which men and women discussed them” (*The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, p. 34).

- a. The Tyndale Bible was read widely. In 1537 or 1538, Thomas Swynnerton noted in his handbook of rhetoric (not a religious tract): “Every man hath a Testament in his hand.”

- (1) The excitement and change that was wrought in British society by the distribution of the first printed English Bible is described by John Foxe. “Everybody that could, bought the book or busily read it or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose. And even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the holy Scripture read.”

- (2) The Tyndale Bible was read aloud to groups large and small, in churches, homes, and even in public places. John Strype speaks of the interest excited by those old Bibles. “It was wonderful to see with what joy this book of God was received, not only among the learned sort, but generally all England, over, among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness the Word of God was read, and what resort to places where the reading of it was! Every body that could, bought the book, or busily read it, or got others to read it to them, if they could not themselves. Divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose; and even little boys flocked, among the Rest, to hear portions of the Holy Scripture read” (Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, 1816).

- (3) The services of the Church of England called for the New Testament to be read through, aloud and in English, three times a year, the Old Testament once, and the Psalms (read or sung) every month.

- b. The Tyndale Bible was printed by the millions.

- (1) Between 1525 and 1640, printed English Bibles and parts numbered, “at a modest estimate, over two million. ... England had far more Bibles than Germany” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 121, 129). This was for a population of only about six million. Just in Shakespeare’s lifetime, a mere 52 years, there were a whopping 211 editions of the English Bible or New Testament.

- (2) In the 18th and 19th centuries, more than 1,200 editions were printed, largely of the KJV.

- (3) These figures don’t begin to describe the breath of the Bible’s influence in past centuries, for it is impossible to give the statistics for the Bible’s influence

through preaching and reading, through quotations in newspapers and magazines and books, and through the publication of Scripture portions. The *Soldier's Pocket Bible*, for example, which was printed in large quantities in England and America up to the end of the American Civil War, contained 150 Bible verses.

c. Multitudes of commoners were motivated to learn to read and were thus lifted out of illiteracy by their enthusiasm to study the Bible in their own tongue.

(1) Consider the story of William Maldon of Newington. He was a young man during the reign of Henry VIII when some men in his town bought a Tyndale New Testament and would read it on Sundays in the back of the church. Many gathered around to hear “the glad and sweet tidings of the gospel,” and William joined them. His father, a staunch Roman Catholic, forbade him to do this and forced him to listen to the unintelligible Latin mass. William said, “This grieved me very much, and thus did he fetch me away divers times.” William determined to learn to read English so that he could read the Bible for himself, which he did. He obtained an English primer and studied diligently and soon he pooled his money together with that of his father’s apprentice Thomas Jeffary and purchased a Tyndale New Testament. They kept it hidden in the bedstraw and read from it as often as possible. When his father found that he was persisting in reading Scripture, he beat him often and finally tried to kill him by strangling him. Left for dead, William was rescued by his mother and sister, though he said that “I think six days after my neck grieved me with the pulling of the halter” (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 1911, pp. 128-71).

(2) Even people who could not read loved the Tyndale Bible and memorized large portions of it. Consider the following examples given by David Daniell: “There can be found, in John Foxe and elsewhere, accounts of the thoroughness of the Bible knowledge of often the humblest men and women: men and women who often could not read. Rawlins White was a Cardiff fisherman burned in 1555. He was illiterate, but in Edward VI’s reign he yearned to study the Bible. He sent one of his children to school to learn to read English (an indication that his native tongue was Welsh). The boy would read a portion of the Bible to his father every night, after supper. White would commit this to memory, so successfully that, as Foxe reports, when someone made a Scripture reference he could cite the book, the leaf and the very sentence. Similarly, John Maundrel, who was burned in Salisbury in Mary’s reign, carried a Tyndale New Testament everywhere, though he could not read. When he met anyone that could read, his book was always ready. He could recite by heart most places of the New Testament. Joan Waste was a blind woman in Derby who earned her living making hose and sleeves. She saved her money and though she could not read, bought a New Testament, and had it read to her a chapter at a time. This she

memorized, so that she could recite many chapters of the New Testament without the book. She was burned in 1558. A Mrs. Prest, burned in Exeter, also in 1558, was illiterate, but caused Sir Walter Raleigh's mother to comment that Mrs. Prest's Scripture knowledge was even greater than hers, though she could not read" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 269, 270).

- (3) Thus was brought to pass that prophetic saying of Tyndale, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."
- d. Daniell observes: "To write about English life between 1525 and 1640 and take no account at all of such enormous popular demand as these totals [of Bibles published] demonstrate is surely to be perverse. Yet it is not only commonly done: it has been the norm. The revolution in religion represented here must not be mistaken. A pre-Reformation mass was conducted at the distant altar by the priest, murmuring in Latin with his back to the people. In a post-Reformation service the minister faced his congregation and addressed them in English. It was the difference between a scarcely heard, mumbled *Petite, et dabitur vobis; querite, et invenietis; pulsate, et aperietur vobis*, and the ringing 'Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you' (Matthew 7)" (*The Bible in English*).
- e. In addition to the Bible, and as companions thereof, there were other influential books in English.
  - (1) One of these was Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of Matters Most Special and Memorial*. Though large and expensive (two thick folio volumes in the second edition and three volumes in the third), it sold 28,000 copies unabridged and thousands more abridged between 1563 and 1616.
  - (2) Another example was the English translation of Erasmus's *Paraphrases of the New Testament*, which was read alongside the standard Bible as a help. The government required that all 9,000 parish churches have a copy.

#### 8. The Tyndale Bible had a large role in the creation of the United States of America.

- a. The Bible brought to America by its first settlers in the early 1600s, settlers seeking religious liberty, was the Geneva, an edition of the Tyndale.
- b. And the Bible that had such a great influence upon America's unique founding political documents in the late 1700s was the King James, another edition of Tyndale.

c. The first English Bible printed in America, by Robert Aiken in 1782, was printed only eleven months after the British surrendered at Yorktown, thus ending the Revolutionary War. (A German Luther Bible had been printed in America in 1743.)

(1) The Aiken Bible was recommended to the American people by Congress on September 10, 1782. “*Resolved*, That the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aiken, as subservient to the interest of religion as well as an instance of the progress of the arts in this country ... this recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States.”

(2) Though Aikens, in 1789, petitioned Congress for a 14-year patent “exclusively to print the Holy Scriptures,” it was wisely refused. From its inception America would put no restrictions on the printing of the Bible. The first amendment to the Bill of Rights, ratified in December 1791, began, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” Any American printer was at liberty to print the Bible without government license from the nation’s inception.

d. Americans loved the Tyndale Bible.

(1) “In America, from the first printing of a Bible in 1777 until 1850, there were over fourteen hundred different editions of English Bible ... almost all of them KJV. For thirty years after 1850, the American Bible, by then an essential item in the furnishing of the American home, was in editions and numbers, a phenomenon beyond calculation. No one knows, or will know, how many Bibles the new presses across America, developed by then for newspapers and cheap books, were turning out” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 162, 63).

(2) The American Bible Society, founded in 1816, further flooded the land with inexpensive Bibles. By 1829, the Bible Society’s printer, Daniel Fanshaw in New York, “was operating sixteen Treadwell steam-powered presses exclusively for ABS Bibles” (Daniell, p. 736). With the use of the newly invented stereotyping and by printing in great volume, the Bible Society reduced the price of a New Testament to six cents and a whole Bible to 45 cents. By the 1860s the Bible Society was printing a million Bibles a year. (By 2004 the American Bible Society had distributed more than 6 *billion* Bibles.)

e. The relationship of America to the Bible was illustrated by the frontispiece of the 1792 American “Self-Interpreting Bible.” The drawing depicted three women. “The chief figure represents America. Her left elbow touches a column with thirteen names, headed ‘Washington’; her left hand holds a scroll labelled ‘Constitution’; her

right hand is extended to receive from a kneeling woman an open copy of the ‘Holy Bible’” (Daniell, p. 602).

- f. In America the Bible permeated society at every level. There was a Soldier’s Bible for every soldier and even a Bible for every Pony Express rider. The KJV family Bible was the most respected book in households. It was commonly taken westward by pioneering families. The KJV was used as a textbook and reader in the schools. It even saturated the national dictionary. Noah Webster’s *An American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828 was filled with quotations from the King James Bible. Consider his definition of *faith*: “Evangelical, justifying, or saving faith, is the assent of the mind to the truth of divine revelation, on the authority of God’s testimony, accompanied with a cordial assent of the will or approbation of the heart; an entire confidence or trust in God’s character and declarations, and in the character and doctrines of Christ, with an unreserved surrender of the will to his guidance, and dependence on his merits for salvation. In other words, that firm belief of God’s testimony, and of the truth of the gospel, which influences the will, and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation.” Webster concluded his definition of *faith* by quoting Romans 5:1; 10:10; and Heb. 11:6.

9. (As far as we know) William Tyndale was not able to complete the entire Old Testament before he was put to death by the Catholic Church in 1536. We do know that he completed at least Genesis through 2 Chronicles plus Jonah -- 15 of the 39 books. After his death the translation of the Old Testament was completed by other men and the entire Tyndale Bible was published in several editions, primarily the Coverdale Bible, the Matthew’s Bible, the Bishops Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible, and the King James Bible of 1611.

## **THE COVERDALE BIBLE (1535)**

### **Coverdale’s Life**

1. Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) was born in York and ordained a priest in the Augustinian order in 1514.

2. He was educated at Cambridge, and it was there that he was converted through reading the Scriptures. He fell in love with the Bible and later wrote, “Wherever the Scripture is known it reformeth all things. And why? Because it is given by the inspiration of God.” Coverdale also believed that the Holy Spirit has preserved the Scripture is “in Hebrew, Greek, French, Dutch and in English, as in Latin” (Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England*, 2000, p. 4; cited by David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 13). This is a scriptural and wise view on preservation, as the Lord Jesus commanded that the Bible be preserved in the church age through the fulfillment of His Great Commission (Mat. 28:19-20), which involves the translation of the Scripture into the languages of the people.



3. Coverdale was influenced by and associated with Robert Barnes, who was later martyred for his faith (on July 28, 1540). When Barnes was arrested the first time, in 1525, Coverdale helped to prepare his defense.
4. By 1528, Coverdale left the Augustinians and was preaching against Catholic dogmas such as transubstantiation, the worship of images, and confession to the ear (auricular).
5. These were dangerous views in that day, and Coverdale was exiled thrice from England because of persecution, the first time from 1528-35, the second from 1540-47, and the third from 1556-1559.
6. On September 26, 1546, at the end of the reign of Henry VIII, Coverdale's books, including his Bible, were burned at Paul's Cross. (Henry VIII died four months later.)
7. In early 1548 Coverdale returned to England from his first exile and became chaplain to Katherine Parr, the sixth and final wife of Henry VIII. Parr, a Protestant, financed the English translation of Erasmus's paraphrases of the New Testament. Martyrologist John Foxe tells us that Catherine became "very zealous toward the gospel, and the professors thereof" and that she was "very much given to the reading and study of the holy Scriptures." Parr had re-married after the king's death in January 1547, and she died in childbirth in September 1548. Coverdale preached her funeral sermon.
8. Coverdale was persecuted under Queen Mary. He was imprisoned for two and one half years at the beginning of Queen Mary's reign. "He was several times examined before his inquisitors, and was in extreme peril of his life" (McClure, *The Translators Revived*). Upon the intervention of the king of Denmark, Mary allowed Coverdale to depart for Europe for his third exile.
9. It is a sad and shameful blot on Coverdale's name that he was a member of the commission of 1551 that was appointed to punish "Anabaptist heresy." He was one of the judges at the trial of Anabaptist George van Parris, who was burned alive in April 1551. "He suffered with great constancy of mind, and kissed the stake and faggots that were to burn him" (Burnet, *History of the Reformation*, II). Though the anabaptist Parris was denounced as holding Arian views, that was a catch-all charge in those days that was not always accurate.
10. Coverdale was described by John Bale in 1548 as follows: "Under the mastership of Robert Barnes he drank in good learning with a burning thirst. He was a young man of friendly and upright nature and very gentle spirit, and when the church of England revived, he was one of the first to make a pure profession of Christ. ... he gave himself wholly, to propagating the truth of Jesus Christ's gospel and manifesting his glory. ... His style is charming and gentle, flowing limpidly along: it moves and instructs and delights" (James Mozely, *Coverdale and His Bibles*, 1953, p. 3).

11. Coverdale died in 1569 and was buried at St. Bartholomew's Church. When that was demolished in 1840, his remains were removed to St. Magnus by London Bridge.

### **Coverdale's Association with Tyndale**

1. Like Tyndale, Coverdale was forced to flee England for the relative safety of certain cities on the European continent. His first exile was from 1528-35. According to Foxe he spent from Easter to December 1529 working with Tyndale in Hamburg.

2. Coverdale also helped proofread manuscripts as they went to press in Antwerp before Tyndale's arrest.

### **The Coverdale Bible**

1. The Coverdale Bible first appeared in England in 1536, shortly after Tyndale's death.

a. It was the first entire printed English Bible.

b. It used Tyndale's New Testament and all of the Old Testament portions that Tyndale had completed. The rest of the Old Testament was translated from German and Latin by Coverdale. The title page said: "BIBLIA. THE BIBLE, that is the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn into Englishe, 1535."

2. It was first printed in Europe in late 1535 and shipped to England for distribution. Beginning in 1537 it was printed in London by James Nicholson. By then it had in the title the words "Set forth with the king's most gracious licence."

3. It was dedicated to King Henry VIII and "his dearest just wife, and most vertuous pryncesse, QUEEN ANNE."

a. Thus within one year of Tyndale's death, his Bible was being distributed in England with a dedication to the king.

b. When Anne Boleyn was put to death in May 1536, the dedication in the Coverdale Bible became an obstacle to its distribution. Some copies were therefore modified. Christopher Anderson says that some were changed to "Jane," referring to Henry's third wife Jane Seymoure, and in other copies the name of the queen was removed entirely. Some replaced the title page with a new one that changed the year to 1536 and removed the words "translated out of Douche and Latyn."

4. The Coverdale Bible was intended to be a study Bible.

- a. The page layout was clear, with summaries at the head of each book and chapter. This was in sharp contrast with Bibles before Luther which “could all best be described as solid blocks of heavily printed paper, with no relief, and often no obvious indicators on any page of which chapter of which book a reader might be on” (Daniell, p. 185). The chapter summary to Acts 27 in the Coverdale Bible said, “Paul’s shipping toward Rome, Julius the captain entreateth Paul courteously, at the last they suffer shipwreck.”
- b. It had Luther’s prologue, Tyndale’s preface to Romans, marginal cross-references, and numerous comments on the text. For example, “proselyte” (Mat. 23:15; Acts 6:5) was defined in the margin as “a novice or convert.”
- c. Coverdale taught his readers some of the important principles of Bible interpretation. He wrote in one section of his Bible: “But who so ever thou be that redest scripture, let the holy ghost be thy teacher, and let one text expound another unto thee: as for such dreams, visions, and dark sentences as be hid from thy understanding, commit them unto God, and make no articles of them: but let the plain text be thy guide, and the spirit of God (which is the author thereof) shall lead thee in all truth.”

Consider the important principles that are contained in this one paragraph:

- (1) The Bible can only rightly be interpreted by submission to the Holy Spirit.
  - (2) The Bible must be interpreted by comparing Scripture with Scripture.
  - (3) Difficult passages must not be interpreted in isolation but must be interpreted by those that are clear. It is dangerous to build doctrine on difficult passages.
  - (4) The Bible student must not be discouraged because he cannot understand everything in Scripture. He must trust God with what he doesn’t understand and be patient as he seeks further understanding.
  - (5) The Bible must be interpreted literally and its plainest meaning must be allowed to rule.
- d. The Coverdale Bible had more than 150 pictures, such as Gideon laying out his fleece and Absalom caught in a tree by his hair.
5. The Psalms were newly translated by Coverdale (Tyndale did not get that far before his martyrdom).

a. Coverdale's Psalms were included in the 1549 Book of Common Prayer and were thus read as part of Anglican services from then until the 1960s.

b. Much of Coverdale's work in the Psalms was carried over into the King James Bible. Following are two examples:

"The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands" (Psalm 100:1).

6. Some words in the King James Bible were brought in from the Coverdale, such as "winebibber," "tender mercies," "lovingkindness," and "saving health."

7. The Coverdale Bible contained the 14 apocryphal books, though they were not viewed as canonical.

a. They were assembled together between the Old and New Testaments instead of being scattered among the canonical books as in the Catholic Bibles.

b. Coverdale introduced the Apocrypha with these words: "These books (good reader) which are called Apocrypha, are not judged among the doctors to be of like reputation with the other scripture..."

c. The apocryphal books were printed in all early English Bibles (including the Geneva) and most later ones, including those printed in America, through the 19th century. David Daniell testifies: "The present writer's experience of examining Bibles printed in America throughout the nineteenth century is that in the first half more of them than not included the Apocrypha" (*The Bible in English*, 2003, p. 600).

d. The apocryphal books were also included in the early Protestant Bibles in other languages, including the Luther German and the Olivetan French.

## **THE MATTHEW'S BIBLE (1537)**

1. The Matthew's Bible was so called because "Thomas Matthew" appears on the title page. This was a pen name for John Rogers (1500-1555). It is thought to stand for the apostles Thomas and Matthew (Mat. 10:3).

a. Christopher Anderson, in *Annals of the English Bible*, tells us that it was Tyndale who influenced Rogers to examine the Scriptures, which led to his conversion to Christ and his rejection of Roman dogma.

- b. Cambridge educated, Rogers moved to Antwerp in 1534, while Tyndale was there, to become a chaplain to the English merchantmen. He arrived the year before Tyndale was arrested.
  - c. In about 1538 Rogers moved to Germany and became the pastor at Meldorf, in the Dietmarsh region in the northwest part of the country. He was associated with the Lutherans. Melanchthon had recommended him to the pastorate.
  - d. In his recommendation letter, Melanchthon described Rogers as “a learned man ... gifted with great ability, which he sets off with a noble character ... he will be careful to live in concord with his colleagues ... his integrity, trustworthiness and constancy in every duty make him worthy of the love and support of all good men.”
  - e. In 1547 Rogers returned to England. King Henry VIII had died and his son Edward VI, who was sympathetic to the Reformation, was on the throne.
2. When Tyndale was imprisoned, John Rogers somehow got the manuscripts Tyndale had completed on the Old Testament books. After Tyndale’s martyrdom Rogers completed the translation.
3. For the Matthew’s Bible, Rogers used the Tyndale New Testament and those portions of the Old Testament that Tyndale had completed (Genesis to 2 Chronicles, plus Jonah). For the rest of the Old Testament he revised the Coverdale. In some places, such as the opening chapters of Job, he made a fresh translation.
4. The printing of the Matthew’s Bible was done in Europe and when it was about half finished, two London printers joined the project and completed it.
- a. These were Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch. They carried on the printing beginning with Isaiah. At that point the page numbering begins anew and the new section begins with a title page containing “The prophetes in Englishe” in black and red letters, surrounded by sixteen woodcuts. On the next page the letters “R.G.” appear at the top and the letters “E.W.” at the bottom, with a large woodcut between. These, of course, are the initials of the printers.
  - b. Grafton was later incarcerated in Fleet prison and required to post a large bond promising that he would not print or sell any more Bibles until the king and the bishops could agree on a translation, something they never did in Henry’s day!
5. The Matthew’s Bible was intended for serious study.
- a. It had a collection of biblical passages constituting “An Exhortation to the Study of

- the Holy Scripture.” The initials “J.R.” appear at the end, indicating that this was the work of John Rogers.
- b. It had a summary of Bible doctrine adapted from Jacques Lefevre’s French Bible of 1534.
  - c. It had an alphabetic concordance to Bible subjects, translated from Robert Olivetan’s French Bible of 1535.
  - d. It had more than 2,000 marginal explanatory notes and many cross-references.
6. On February 4, 1555, John Rogers followed his friend Tyndale into the flames and gave his life for his testimony for Christ.
- a. Rogers was imprisoned in Newgate on January 27, 1554, not long after the Roman Catholic Queen Mary ascended to the throne.
  - b. Rogers had a large family; at the time of his death he had ten or eleven children, including a nursing infant. His wife, a German, was named Adriance de Weyden. “She is sometimes called Prat, which is the English form of the same name, both meaning *meadow*” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*).
  - c. His request that his wife be allowed to visit him before his death was cruelly denied by the ecclesiastical authorities.
  - d. He did not see her or the children until he was on the way to his execution at Smithfield. Mrs. Rogers brought the children to the execution “to strengthen him against the ordeal.” Not allowed even to stop and bid his family farewell, he walked calmly to the stake, repeating the 51st Psalm. Offered a pardon if he would recant, he refused. “An immense crowd lined the street, and filled every available spot in Smithfield. Up to that day men could not tell how English Reformers would behave in the face of death, and could hardly believe that Prebendaries and Dignitaries would actually give their bodies to be burned for their religion. But when they saw John Rogers, the first martyr, walking steadily and unflinchingly into a fiery grave, the enthusiasm of the crowd knew no bounds. They rent the air with thunders of applause. Even Noailles, the French Ambassador, wrote home a description of the scene, and said that Rogers went to death ‘as if he was walking to his wedding.’ By God’s great mercy he died with comparative ease” (J.C. Ryle, *Why Were Our Reformers Burned?*).
  - e. The Bible translator John Rogers was the first of almost 300 burned to death during the reign of Queen Mary. (Many others died in prison.)

- f. His widow took her fatherless flock back to Germany. “Daniel Rogers, probably the eldest child, lived to be Queen Elizabeth’s ambassador to Belgium, Germany, and Denmark. Richard Rogers, the famous Puritan minister of Weathersfield, was, in all probability, another son of the martyr; and if so, then the numerous families in New England which trace their descent from Richard, are descended from the illustrious Bible Translator and Protomartyr” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*).

## **THE GREAT BIBLE (1539)**

1. The Great Bible, published in 1539, was an edition of the Matthew’s.
2. Miles Coverdale oversaw the completion and printing of the first Great Bible, but there were several editions that were printed by other parties. Christopher Anderson in *Annals of the English Bible* mentions five or six editions that appeared by 1540 and four more in 1541.
3. This Bible was persecuted by Roman authorities during its printing in France.
  - a. The printing began in Paris in 1538. Coverdale wrote that the work was “daily threatened.” The license they obtained for the printing had a provision that warned that the project had to conform to inquisition laws. Before the printing could be finished, the Romanist French ambassador to England learned of the project and wrote to French authorities, suggesting that it be destroyed.
  - b. Being warned of impending trouble, Coverdale and his workers labored diligently to ship the portions that had already been printed to England. Coverdale wrote, “If these men proceed in their cruelty against us, and confiscate the rest yet this at the least may be safe.”
  - c. Four days later the Roman Catholic Inquisitor-general for France demanded that the printing cease and called for any completed sheets to be removed. The feared Roman Catholic inquisitors descended upon the printing facility, seized the sheets which had not already been shipped to Britain, amounting to, some say, 2500 Bibles, and ordered them burned.
  - d. Bible translator Miles Coverdale and his friend Richard Grafton, who had been overseeing the printing, had to flee from Paris to avoid the inquisition.
  - e. Later, through diplomatic negotiations, they were able to return to Paris and recover the printing presses and type. Some historians also tell us that they were able to recover even many of the condemned sheets. Instead of burning the sheets, the authorities had sold them for waste paper, and the men who had purchased them were willing to sell them back to Coverdale.

f. The first printing of the Great Bible was completed in April 1539.

4. It was called “great” because of its large size. It was published in six volumes, each page measuring 14 X 9 inches. (The Matthew’s Bible was not much smaller, with a page size of 12 X 9 inches.)

5. The Preface contained an interesting statement on the sufficiency of the Bible for faith and life and its importance for every class of people. The following section was from Chrysostom: “Take the books into thine hands, read the whole story, and that thou understandest, keep it well in memory; that thou understandest not, read it again and again. Here may all manner of persons: men, women; young, old; learned, unlearned; rich, poor; priests, laymen; lords, ladies; officers, tenants, and mean men; virgins, wives, widows; lawyers, merchants, artificers, husbandmen, and all manner of persons, of what estate or condition soever they be; may in THIS BOOK learn all things, what they ought to believe, what they ought to do, and what they should not do, as well concerning Almighty God, as also concerning themselves, and all others.” It is this faith that the Bible is divinely inspired and the sufficient and sole rule for faith, life, and practice that was the ground of the Reformation. This faith motivated men and women to study, practice, translate, and distribute the Scriptures in the vernacular even in the face of death.

6. Copies were placed in all of the churches of England upon royal authority. Thomas Cromwell “ordered that ... a copy of the Great should be placed in every parish church in England. ... Thus it came about that Tyndale’s Bible was circulated extensively for many years in the name of others, and with the king’s formal authorization, and became the basis for subsequent translations” (Paris Simms, *Bible from the Beginning*, 1929, p. 178).

7. The Great Bible also attained the name The Chained Bible, because copies were often chained to reading desks that were attached to a pillar in the church. This was to discourage theft.

## **THE GENEVA BIBLE (1557, 1560)**

1. The Geneva Bible was produced by English refugees that settled in Geneva to escape the persecutions of the Roman Catholic Queen Mary, who reigned in England from 1553-58.

2. Geneva was a bastion of Bible text and translation/printing activity.

- a. Robert Olivetan’s French translation was published in Geneva in 1556. Financial support for the printing had come from Waldensian churches in northern Italy (Daniel Lortch, *Histoire de la Bible Francaise [History of the French Bible]*, p. 105; from an English translation appearing in *Documentation on the Olivetan-Ostervald Bible* by Curtis Gibson, p. 2).



- b. In 1556 a reprint of the Spanish New Testament translated by Juan Perez de Pineda was published in Geneva.
  - c. In 1562 a revised edition of the Diotati Italian Bible was prepared and printed in Geneva. Between then and 1665, five of the seven Italian Bibles came from Geneva.
  - d. Geneva was the home of Theodore Beza, one of the prominent Protestant scholars of the day and an editor of the Greek Received New Testament. Beza, who took John Calvin's place in Geneva in 1564, published editions of the Received Text in 1565, 1582, 1588-9, and 1598. Beza was the first rector of the Academy of Geneva, which was inaugurated on June 5, 1555.
3. The Geneva Bible in English was chiefly the work of **WILLIAM WHITTINGHAM**, with assistance from others.
- a. Whittingham was a graduate of Oxford (Brasenose College, All Souls, and Christ Church) and had traveled widely in Europe. He moved to Geneva in 1555, a little over a year after Queen Mary took the throne, and he became the pastor of the English congregation of about 100 members.
  - b. He married Catharine Chauvin, the sister of John Calvin. (*Calvinus* is the Latin form of the French name *Chauvin*.)
  - c. Whittingham returned to England after the publication of the Geneva Bible and was the author of several metrical versions of the Psalms that are still sung in Anglican congregations. In 1563 he was appointed dean at Durham.
  - d. He was persecuted by "traditionalists" in the Church of England unto the time of his death. He was repeatedly tried in ecclesiastical courts for non-conformity.
  - e. He died in 1579 at age 65 and was buried in the cathedral at Durham (Cathedral Church of Christ and St. Mary the Virgin). "He was an eminently pious and powerful preacher, and an ornament to religion and learning, to which he greatly contributed by his publications, and chiefly by his agency in the revision of the English Bible" (Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived: Biographical Notes of the KJV Translators*, 1855).
4. Particularly in the Old Testament Whittingham was aided by other English exiles, including Miles Coverdale, Christopher Goodman, Anthony Gilbey, Thomas Sampson, William Cole, William Kette (or Kethe), John Baron, John Pullain, John Bodley. It is even possible that John Knox assisted in the project, as he was pastor of the English-speaking congregation in Geneva off and on from September 1556 until January 1559.

- a. Anthony Gilbey, born in Lincolnshire, was educated at Christ's Church College, Cambridge, and skilled in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He was noted "for a flaming zeal against the errors and abominations of papistry, and all the remnants and patches of it retained in the Church of England" (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Gilbey fled to Europe during the persecutions by Queen Mary and returned after the accession of Elizabeth.
- b. Thomas Samson (1517-1589) was Oxford educated and "was a stout Protestant and puritan, and a very great scholar" (McClure). He was appointed Dean of Winchester in 1552 and after the accession of Queen Mary he escaped England "with great difficulty." After he returned to England he turned down an offer to be the bishop of Norwick because of "conscientious scruples." Instead, in 1560 he became Dean of Christ Church at Oxford University and was considered was of the greatest linguists in the nation. A letter written by men associated with the college to solicit his appointment said: "After well considering all the learned men in the land, they found none to be compared to him for singular learning and great piety, having the praise of all men. And it is very doubtful whether there is a better man, a greater linguist, a more complete scholar, a more profound divine." In 1564 Samson was arrested under Queen Elizabeth, deprived of his office, and charged with non-conformity. In 1570 he was made Prebendary of Pancras in St. Paul's Cathedral. He died in 1589 at the age of seventy-two.
- c. Christopher Goodman had been Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford.

5. The New Testament was published in 1557; the entire Bible in 1560. It was funded by the English congregation in Geneva. A prominent member who provided substantial money was John Bodley, "whose son Thomas would later found the Bodleian Library at Oxford" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 294).

- a. The Geneva Bible was often printed in small sizes that were convenient for missionary work. The Geneva New Testament was the same size (octavo) as the little Tyndale New Testament.
- b. The page layout was uncluttered and attractive.
  - (1) It was printed in clear Roman type instead of the heavy Gothic Black Letter that had been used commonly in Bibles before that.
  - (2) The type was ruled off with red lines and surrounded by wide margins on the sides and at the bottom.
  - (3) The headings across the top of each page told the reader at a glance what book he was reading.

- (4) Each chapter was preceded by a summary of its content.
- c. It contained many notes, explaining the text, teaching Protestant doctrine, and, in some cases, condemning Roman Catholicism. There is an average of two notes per page.
- (1) The note at Jeremiah 44:17: “It seemeth that the Papists gathered of this place their *Salve Regina*, and *Regina caeli laetare*, calling the virgin Mary Queen of Heaven, and so of the blessed virgin and mother of a Saviour Christ made an idol: for here the Prophet condemneth this idolatry.”
  - (2) The note at Revelation 9:3: “Locusts are false teachers, heretics, and worldly subtle Prelates, with Monks, Friars, Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Doctors, Bachelors, and Masters which forsake Christ to maintain their false doctrine.”
  - (3) The note at Revelation 16:2: “This was like the sixth plague of Egypt, which was sores and boils or pocks: and this reigneth commonly among Canons, monks, friars, nuns, priests, and such filthy vermin which bear the mark of the beast.”
  - (4) The note at Revelation 16:13 said the “unclean spirits like frogs” are “a strong number of the great devil the Pope’s ambassadors, which are ever crying and croaking like frogs and come out of Antichrist’s mouth, because they should speak nothing but lies and use all manner of crafty deceit to maintain their rich Euphrates against the true Christians.”
- (5) Following are some of the notes from Revelation 17 in the 1560 edition:
- “...Christ Jesus who will take vengeance on this Romish harlot.”
- “The Beast signifies an ancient Rome; The woman that sits thereon, the New Rome which is the Papistry, whose cruelty and blood shedding is declared by scarlet and full of idolatries, superstitions and contempt for the true God.”
- “This woman is the Antichrist, that is, the Pope with the whole body of his filthy creatures, as is expounded in verse 18.”
- d. There were many pictures, including interesting drawings of Solomon’s temple, and even maps.
- e. The 1560 Geneva was called the “Breeches Bible” because it said Adam and Eve made themselves “breeches” in Genesis 3:7. In fact, the Geneva translators must have borrowed this from the Wycliffe Bible.

6. The Geneva Bible was a milestone in many important ways:

- a. It was the first entire English Bible to contain verse divisions throughout. Before this, the English Bibles had been divided into chapters and paragraphs. In the verse divisions, the Geneva translators followed the Stephanus' Greek New Testament of 1551 and the Latin Bible of 1555, which was the first entire Bible in any language to contain verse divisions.
- b. For the first time in English, words not in the Greek but thought necessary to carry the meaning in English are printed in ITALIC.
- c. The Geneva contains, for the first time in an English Bible, the entire Old Testament translated from Hebrew. William Tyndale had completed Genesis through 2 Chronicles and Jonah (as far as we know) before his arrest and martyrdom. The rest of the Old Testament was translated in the Coverdale, Matthew's, and Bishops Bibles from Latin and German rather than Hebrew. Speaking of Christopher Goodman, Anthony Gilbey, and the others who produced the Geneva Old Testament, David Daniell says: "They were, it is now clear, exceptional Hebrew scholars. They were the first to use at first hand the Hebrew commentary of David Kimshi, followed in those readings in many places in KJV. They had also a remarkable, almost Tyndalian, grasp of English, the knowledge to use available helps in at least five languages (Aramaic, Latin, Greek, German and French); and the ability to work fast" (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 314, 15).

7. The Geneva quickly became the most popular English Bible and wielded a powerful influence for almost 100 years, until its popularity waned in favor of the King James Version.

- a. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, more than two-thirds of the 138 editions of the Bible printed in England were the Geneva.
- b. The Geneva was the Bible carried to America by the first settlers from England in the early 17th century.

### **THE BISHOPS BIBLE (1568)**

1. The Bishops Bible was produced in 1568 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who followed the Roman Catholic Mary and established the Church of England on a Protestant footing.

2. Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, oversaw the production of the Bishops Bible. It was so called because most of those who worked on it were Anglican bishops.

3. The bishops wanted a Bible to compete with the popular Geneva Bible and one that could replace the Great Bible.

4. The Bishops Bible was translated by some men who were persecuted for their faith. Consider two examples:

- a. Thomas Bentham, a Fellow of Magdalen College in Oxford, was ejected from his position during Queen Mary's reign and was forced to flee to Europe, where he became a preacher at Zurich and Basle.
- b. Edmund Grindall was also educated at Magdalen College and was persecuted under the reign of Queen Mary.

5. The Bishops Bible was never popular with the people of England. Though it was promoted by the bishops and though Matthew Parker did not allow Geneva Bibles even to be printed in England, the Geneva continued to be the people's Bible until after the publication of the King James. It was simply imported from overseas. Between 1568 and 1611, during which 20 editions of the Bishops' were printed, there were 120 of the Geneva.

### **THE KING JAMES BIBLE (1611)**

This is the most famous and influential of the English Reformation Bibles. It is called the *King James Bible* or the *King James Version* (KJV) because its production was authorized in 1604 by King James I, who ruled England from 1603 to 1625. In Britain it is more commonly called *The Authorized Version*.

### **The Proposal and Authorization**

1. James Stuart (1566-1625) was king (James VI) of Scotland before he was king (James I) of England.

- a. He ascended the throne of Scotland in July 1567, at age 13 months, when his Roman Catholic mother Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587) was forced to abdicate.

(1) James' father, Henry Stuart (Lord Darnley), died in mysterious circumstances shortly after James was born. He was assassinated and it was rumored that Mary had a part in the crime. "The rift between Mary and her husband became public knowledge. She turned to a Scottish nobleman, a very powerful man, the Earl of Bothwell, for support. He and other Scottish noblemen proposed to do whatever they could to help the queen in her dilemma. This decision led to a failed explosion plot and to the strangulation death of Darnley. A few months later, Mary and the Earl married. This angered the populace who suspected Bothwell's participation in the murder of their King. Mary's subjects were outraged and turned against her" ("Mary Queen of Scots," <http://home.earthlink.net/~zzz12/>).

- (2) Mary fled to England and sought help from her cousin Queen Elizabeth I. She was imprisoned, instead. Nineteen years later Mary was found guilty of participating in a plot to kill Elizabeth, and the 44-year-old former queen was beheaded at Fortheringhay Castle in 1587.
- (3) In 1612, James moved his mother's body to Westminster Abbey, constructing for her a magnificent tomb that rivaled that of Elizabeth.
- b. James became king of England in March 1603 upon the death of Elizabeth. He was the closest living relative of the unmarried childless queen, being the son of Elizabeth's cousin. He united England and Scotland.
- c. James married Anne of Denmark and they had eight children, of whom only three lived beyond infancy: Henry, Prince of Wales (1594-1612), Elizabeth Stuart (1596-1662), and King Charles I of England, Scotland and Ireland (1600-1649).
- d. James was known as the most educated sovereign in Europe. "Among those justifiably attributed refinements was his reputation as a paragon of learning, crammed with Greek and Latin and other tongues. In spite of his physical disabilities, his mind was first rate. Already at the age of seven he 'was able, extempore ... to read a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French and next out of French into English as well as few men could have added anything to his translation.' ... Before he was 20 ... he had translated 30 of the Psalms in metrical form and as a parallel venture had paraphrased the Revelation of St. John" (Olga Opfell, *The King James Translators*, pp. 1, 7). In 1604 he published *A Counterblast to Tobacco*, aimed against "this vile custom of tobacco taking."
- e. One of the major events in James' reign was **the Gunpowder Plot**. An attempt was made by Roman Catholic agents to assassinate the king, queen, and parliament by exploding barrels of gunpowder in a room underneath the House of Lords. The plan was "to kill the king, seize his children, stir up an open revolt with aid from Spaniards in Flanders, put Princess Elizabeth on the throne, and marry her to a papist" (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 89). On November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes was caught in the act of attempting to carry out the deed. In May, Fawkes had taken a solemn oath with his co-conspirators, which oath "was then sanctified by the performing of mass and the administering of the sacraments by the Jesuit priest John Gerard in an adjoining room" (David Herber, "Guy Fawkes," <http://www.britannia.com/history/g-fawkes.html>).
- f. Though James was a scholarly man and had some good qualities, he was not very popular. "He laid much of the groundwork that would eventually lead to the beheading of his heir Charles I during the English Civil War, but because of his

political skills, his rule was relatively stable” (“King James I,” <http://www.greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/king-james.html>).

2. Soon after King James assumed the throne of England in 1603, following the reign of Elizabeth I, he was approached by a group of Puritans led by John Reynolds, president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and presented with **the Millennium Petition**. This called for spiritual reform in the Church of England along Presbyterian lines, and it got its name from the fact that it was signed by an estimated 1,000 ministers. The Puritans were encouraged to pursue their objective by the fact that James had been a Presbyterian in Scotland. His true colors were not yet fully known.

3. A three-day conference was held at **HAMPTON COURT** in January 1604 to discuss the petition, and it was here that the decision was made to make the King James Bible.

- a. Hampton Court is a magnificent royal palace on the River Thames, not far from London. The first part of it was built for the Knights Hospitallers, a religious order founded in the early 12th century to protect the land of Israel from the Muslims. In the early 1500s, Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal and Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII, obtained a 99-year lease on the property and expanded it into a royal palace. Wolsey built royal lodgings for Henry, and eventually all six of Henry’s wives spent time there, including two who were possibly believers, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr. Henry’s marriage to Catherine Parr took place in the Chapel Royal at Hampton Court, and his son Edward was baptized there. The royal barge would travel to and from London and would dock at the court. Henry’s Astronomical Clock in the tower near the entrance not only kept time but also kept track of the tide so the river trips could be planned more easily. Amazingly, the clock has survived and still works today. In 1528, Wolsey was forced to relinquish Hampton Court to the King because he had been unable to secure the Pope’s consent for Henry’s divorce. Within ten years, Henry spent more than 62,000 British pounds, a sum in today’s money that would be more than many tens of millions of dollars, on construction at Hampton Court. There were tennis courts, bowling alleys, vast pleasure gardens, an 1,100-acre hunting park, kitchens covering 36,000 feet of space for the feeding of 1,200 people daily, the great dining hall that could seat hundreds, an elaborate chapel, a massive lavatory that could seat 28 people at a time (known as the Great House of Easement), even a plumbing system that brought water by lead pipes from three miles away. Hampton Court is a museum today. As seen today the palace is largely that of the late 17th century reconstruction that was done by Christopher Wren for William III and Mary II.
- b. The king’s Hampton Court conference was announced as a sincere attempt to reconcile the differences between the Puritans and the traditionalists, but it was anything but this, causing the Puritans afterwards to call it a “mock conference.”

Only four Puritans were invited, as opposed to at least 22 traditionalists (with the king at their head). “It soon became manifest that the only object of the meeting was to give the king an opportunity to declare his bitter hostility to the Puritans, who were brow-beaten, insulted, and trampled upon by the tyrant and his ghostly minions. The Puritans were confuted ... ‘with seven solid arguments, thus reckoned up, Authority, Violence, Craft, Fraud, Intimidation, Terror and Tyranny.’ The monarch roundly declared that he would ‘harry out of the land’ all who would not conform their consciences to his dictation” (Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived*). Indeed, many did flee, including the Pilgrims who helped found America. McClure tells of a certain joke that had the king and his sycophant traditionalist clergymen in hysterics at the expense of the Puritans: “A Puritan is a Protestant frayed out of his wits!” This truly funny saying was told by “one Butler, a Cambridge man.”

- c. During the conference Reynolds suggested that a new translation of the English Bible be produced.

(1) This scene was described by William Barlow in his *Sum and Substance of the Conference*. Barlow, the Dean of Chester, became one of the KJV translators. He was very prejudiced against the Puritans. “After that, he [Reynolds] moved his Majesty, that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those that were allowed in the reigns of Henry the eighth, and Edward the sixth, were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the Original. ... Whereupon his Highness wished that some special pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation (professing that he could never yet, see a Bible well translated in English; for the worst of all, his Majesty thought the Geneva to be) and this was to be done by the best learned in both the Universities, after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church: from them to be presented to the Privy-Council; and lastly to be ratified by his Royal authority; and so his whole Church to be bound unto it, and none other. ... Marry, withal, he gave this caveat (upon a word cast out by my Lord of London) that no marginal note should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation (which he saw in a Bible given him by an English Lady) some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous, and traitorous conceits.” Note: It is very doubtful that the king knew of the Geneva Bible only what had been shown to him “by an English lady.” By this manner of speaking Barlow was putting the Geneva into the least respectable light and pretending that the king had no serious interest in it. Later, as we will see, the Geneva was specifically named as one of the translations that should be consulted by the translators.

(2) The same scene was described in the original preface to the King James Bible,



written by Miles Smith, as follows: “For the very historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans at his Majesty’s coming to this crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints, when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was, as they said, a most corrupted translation. And though this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift, yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this translation which is now presented unto thee.”

- (3) It is evident that both accounts are deeply prejudiced against the Puritans. The fact is that they were not defeated by “force of reason” but by brute force. It is to be regretted that none of the Puritans wrote the history of the Hampton Court conference from their perspective. As it stands today, we have this testimony only from the mouth of their enemies, something that has occurred all too frequently in church history.

d. Where were the meetings held at Hampton Court?

- (1) Some of the meetings were held in the king’s privy chamber, which was a large room in Henry VIII’s state suite on the east side of the clock tower. “As George II altered this part of the palace, no one can now see the spot where Rainolds stood when he proposed the translation” (Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version*, p. 4, f. 1).
- (2) We were told by a staff member at Hampton Court in 2003 that it is thought that part of this historic meeting was held in the Cartoon Gallery, which is so called because of the impressive paintings that hang on the walls depicting biblical scenes. (A cartoon was a painting that was used as a model for the creation of tapestries, frescos, or statues.) The Gallery was first built to display Raphael’s *Acts of the Apostles*. These paintings were originally commissioned by Pope Leo X as the models for tapestries which were intended to decorate the Sistine Chapel. Seven of the original 25 paintings found their way to England. Queen Victoria gave the originals to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the paintings in the Cartoon Gallery today are copies that were made by Henry Cooke in 1697. Three of the tapestries that were made from original cartoons by Raphael which have been lost are in the Vatican. These depict the stoning of Stephen, the conversion of Paul, and Paul in prison at Philippi. We got some good photos of the Cartoon Room at Hampton Court both from the inside and out.

4. The approval of the two-faced king of the translation of the masterly Bible that bears his name is a wonderful example of God's sovereign rule in man's affairs. While the king and the politically-motivated traditionalist bishops he invited to Hampton Court did not have the best interest of the English people in heart, they were overruled by One who did. We must view the history of the Bible through faith in the God of the Bible.

5. Within six months a list of 54 scholars was drawn up for the work. Deaths and withdrawals reduced the number and the surviving lists name 50 men, but we know that others were involved in the work. The work was divided among six companies of translators, two meeting at Cambridge, two at Oxford, and two at Westminster (London).

6. It has often been repeated in histories of the translation that the work did not begin until about 1607, but this is not true.

- a. In November 1604 Lancelot Andrewes, director of one of the two companies at Westminster, mentioned the work in a letter to Mr. Hartwell, Secretary of Antiquaries (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 438). He excused himself from attending a meeting of the Antiquaries Society because it would cause him to miss the regularly scheduled translator's meeting. He also said that the work was proceeding slowly, indicating that not all of the scholars were yet fully involved.
- b. The Oxford company that met at Merton College, which was responsible for the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation, began its work on February 13, 1605, according to the college register (Adam Nicholson, *God's Secretaries*, p. 154).
- c. Anthony Walker, in his *Life of John Bois*, said that Bois spent four years in the translation itself and then nine months in the review process at Stationers' Hall (see Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, 1884, pp. 12-13).

## **The Spiritual Climate for the Translation**

1. The King James Bible came out of a period of intense persecution and spiritual revival.

- a. The Wycliffe Bible was persecuted and was a product of spiritual revival; it was the Bible of the Lollards. Laws were passed against it and its translator's bones were dug up and burned. Hundreds of the men and women who loved the Wycliffe Bible were imprisoned, tortured, and burned to death.
- b. The Tyndale Bible was persecuted; thousands of copies were burned and otherwise destroyed by ecclesiastical authorities; laws were passed against it; and its translator was strangled and burned at the stake.

- c. Miles Coverdale, translator of the Coverdale Bible, was thrice exiled for his faith and was imprisoned for two and a half years during the reign of Queen Mary. His books were burned at Pauls' Cross in September 1546 toward the end of the reign of Henry VIII.
- d. The translator of the Matthew's Bible, John Rogers, was burned to death for his faith.
- e. Some of the translators of the Bishops Bible had been persecuted for their faith by Queen Mary.
- f. The Geneva Bible was also a product of persecution and spiritual revival, having been produced by men who were in exile for their faith, and even when translator William Whittingham returned to England he was persecuted by "traditionalists" in the Church of England, being repeatedly tried in ecclesiastical courts for non-conformity.
- g. These Bibles had created a great spiritual awakening in England and beyond. It was a time when men accepted the Bible as the literal Word of God, when they had passion about their religion and were willing to pay any price for their faith, whether a turn on the rack, a dangerous journey across the seas, or even a fiery death.

2. In the early 17th century, church attendance was compulsory in England and knowledge of the Bible was pervasive. "The state ordained that every man, woman and child should attend morning service and evening prayer on Sundays and festival days, heads of households being responsible for the attendance of their wives, children, servants, and apprentices. Neglectful parishioners could be fined" (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 35). Though we do not agree with compulsory church attendance nor do we agree with everything that was taught in the Anglican churches that the people were required to attend in that day, this policy produced a biblically knowledgeable citizenry. It is doubtful that there has ever been a nation more steeped in basic Bible knowledge than 17th century England. The people were required to attend church, and at church they heard the entire Bible read and sung in the liturgy.

3. There was also a pervasive climate of earnestly contending for the Protestant Christian faith and a bold opposition to Romanism, atheism, and other enemies of the faith. It was not a day of spiritual neutrality and positivism. The sword of the Spirit was not sheathed. As we will see, many of the translators of the King James Bible were warriors for their Christian faith and stood earnestly against the Roman Catholic Church.

## **The Literary Climate for the Translation**

1. By the early 17th century the English Bible had been developing for more than two centuries. The wording of the King James Bible represents the labors of centuries of brilliant, believing, sacrificial, godly scholarship. Dozens of some of the best biblical linguists who have ever lived

applied their minds and their prayers to translating into English precisely what the Hebrew and Greek text mean.

- a. The foundation for the English Bible was the Wycliffe Bible of 1384. Though it was translated from Latin rather than Hebrew and Greek and thus contained some textual errors, it was a masterpiece of translation work. Wycliffe and his editors had a gift of molding the English language to fit the Bible. As we have seen, many words and phrases passed from the Wycliffe into the Tyndale and from there into the King James Bible.
  - b. The next important step in the progress of the English Bible was the publication of Tyndale's masterpiece, based directly upon the Hebrew and the Greek.
  - c. The Tyndale Bible was completed by John Rogers after Tyndale's death and appeared as the Matthew's Bible.
  - d. This went through various revisions, particularly the Great, Geneva, and Bishops, preparing the way for the King James Bible.
  - e. "Thus it came to pass, that the English Bible received its present form, after a fivefold revision of the translation as it was left in 1537 by Tyndale and Rogers. During this interval of seventy-four years, it had been slowly ripening, till this last, most elaborate, and thorough revision under King James matured the work for coming centuries" (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855, p. 59).
2. By the early 17th century the English language was at its apex. Alexander McClure observed: "The English language had passed through many and great changes, and had at last reached the very height of its purity and strength. The Bible has ever since been the grand English classic. It is still the noblest monument of the power of the English speech. It is the pattern and standard of excellence therein" (*The Translators Revived*).

### **The Scholarly Climate for the Translation**

1. By the early 17th century knowledge of biblical languages was at an apex in some ways. Realizing that this view is contrary to that held by most contemporary scholars, we invite you to consider our reasons for making this statement.
  - a. Consider the following descriptions of that time, called "a period which was remarkable both in its wealth of eruditional effort and in the significance of its concentration of deepest learning on the Bible centre," from *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* (1907–21):

“LARGE PORTIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES WERE KNOWN BY HEART, NOT ONLY BY MINISTERS, BUT, ALSO, BY THE LAITY, AND EVEN BY CHILDREN, who were also well drilled in Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* and other histories of persecutions. Whilst French Huguenot children were trained, Spartanlike, to look forward to dying for the faith, English children, from the earliest age, were disciplined in prayer, in reading books of devotion and in the close knowledge of Bible histories and Bible doctrine. ... Hence, we notice psychologically, THERE WERE DEVELOPED ENORMOUS INDUSTRY IN LEARNING, endurance in listening to preachers and teachers, tenacious memory and the power of visualising and concentrating the thoughts on Bible heroes, Bible stories, Bible language and Bible aspirations. Scripture students were indefatigable workers. Bishop Morton was at his studies before four o’clock in the morning, even after he was 80 years of age. Matthew Poole rose at three or four o’clock, ate a raw egg at eight or nine, another at twelve and continued his studies till late in the afternoon. Sir Matthew Hale, for many years, studied sixteen hours a day. For several years John Owen did not allow himself more than four hours’ sleep. FEATS OF MEMORY ARE AS REMARKABLE FOR THEIR FREQUENCY AS FOR THEIR COMPREHENSIVENESS, AND WERE PRACTISED FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD in the repeating of sermons, in the learning of Latin grammar and in almost every academic discipline. Moreover, the number of references to memory testifies to the conscious cultivation of the art. ... In short, the scholarship and learning of this period, by their direct bearing upon the Bible, permeated and transfigured the national life in a rare degree, giving it, in spite of all its excesses and deficiencies, A STRENUOUSNESS, SOBRIETY, AND, ON THE WHOLE, A SINCERITY, PROBABLY NEVER SO LARGELY SUSTAINED, BY BOOK LEARNING, IN ANY AGE, and rarely in any country” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII, *Cavalier and Puritan*, Part XIII, “Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60”).

“GREEK, ALSO, WAS A PRESSING ACCOMPLISHMENT, for a large constituency besides the professor and scholar. Nor were Greek experts so few as is often supposed. In The Authorised Version of the Bible (1607–11), adequate scholarship in Greek was available in Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, James Montague, Thomson, Savile, Perin, Harmar, William Barlow, Hutchinson, Spencer, Fenton, Rabbett, Sanderson, Dakins. Of the other translators employed on the Old Testament Apocrypha, John Duport, Downes and Bois were of still greater renown for their knowledge of Greek. J. Bass Mullinger remarks on the low state of Greek in English universities in the latter part of the sixteenth century. He names Whitaker, Dering, Gabriel Harvey, Aylmer, as almost alone proving that Greek at Cambridge was ‘not extinct.’ It was otherwise in the period 1600–60. Andrew Downes, professor of Greek in Cambridge from 1585 to 1625, published lectures on Lysias: *De Caede Eratosthenis* (1593) and on Demosthenes: *De Pace* (1621). Francis Hicks,

a gentleman of Worcestershire, made Greek his study and recreation, and published a translation into Latin, with notes, of select dialogues of Lucian, 1634. John Price, one of the greatest scholars of the period, professor of Greek at Pisa, showed great learning in his commentaries on the New Testament, illustrated by references to Greek and Latin Fathers (1646–7). In 1636, Gerard Langbaine published his notes on Longinus. In 1637, John Harmar, regius professor of Greek at Oxford, issued his etymological Greek lexicon. In 1652, Thomas Gataker produced his Marcus Antoninus, Greek text, with Latin translation and commentary. Finally, in 1661, Joseph Caryl, Thomas Cockayne, Ralph Venning, William Dell, Matthew Barker, William Adderley, Matthew Mead, Henry Jersey, all nonconformist ministers, jointly published a Greek-English dictionary of all the words in the New Testament. This list is only representative of the types of works in Greek. But we must take into account the undoubtedly deep knowledge of Greek possessed by Gataker (who had been taught by Bois), overshadowed as it is by his Hebrew and other oriental studies; by Ussher with his expert knowledge of Greek geography, astronomy and other Greek material for chronology, his treatise on the origin of the Greek Septuagint and the editing of two ancient Greek versions of the Book of Esther; by Selden, the great dictator of English learning, in his *Marmora Arundeliana*, 1628, in which he was helped by Patrick Young and Richard James; by John Hales and the Cambridge Platonists; by John Milton; by Philemon Holland and the other translators. BESIDES GRAMMAR TEXT-BOOKS AND ANNOTATIONS ON GREEK AUTHORS, THERE IS EVIDENCE OF READY KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK IN ALL KINDS OF WRITERS, AND INDICATIONS OF A NOT UNCOMMON ERUDITION. Jeremiah Whitaker, of Oakham free school, read all the epistles in the Greek Testament twice every fortnight. John Conant, regius professor of divinity in Oxford, often disputed publicly in Greek in the schools. In the period 1648–59, the disputations at Oxford were often in Greek. Henry Stubbe, in 1651, wrote, in *Horae Subsecivae*, translations into Greek from Randolph and Crashaw. But the readiest in this art was James Duport, who wrote Greek hexameters on the death of the vice-master of Trinity college, Cambridge. He rendered into Homeric verse The Book of Job (1637) and Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and The Song of Solomon (1646), and won high recognition by these feats” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII, *Cavalier and Puritan*, Part XIII, Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60, “Latin and Greek scholarship”).

“From the time of the new Elizabethan and Stewart foundations of grammar schools, THE THREE ‘HOLY’ LANGUAGES--LATIN, GREEK AND HEBREW--HAD BEEN THE AIM OF PROTESTANT WORKERS IN EDUCATION, not only for providing antagonists capable of meeting Catholic opponents in disputation, orally and in books, but, also, for coming ‘nearer’ to the primitive times of the Christian era. BOYS IN SCHOOL WERE TO LEARN THEIR CATECHISM IN A GREEK TEXT, READ THE NEW TESTAMENT IN GREEK, LEARN, IF

MIGHT BE, TO SPEAK IN GREEK. The aim of school and university, in their Greek studies, was, in the long run, theological” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII, Cavalier and Puritan, Part XIII Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60, “Hebrew scholarship”).

“IN THE UNIVERSITIES, THEOLOGY WAS THE CHIEF SUBJECT, and, as J. Bass Mullinger says, with few exceptions, secured the attention of all those ‘who contended for intellectual distinction, for popularity and for the prizes of high office and social influence.’ ... Accordingly, theology had full sway in the universities, and, AS STUDENTS LEFT THE UNIVERSITY, THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF GREEK AND HEBREW BECAME CONTRIBUTORY TO THE GREAT DIVINITY STREAM. Venn has shown that, in 1630, one out of 3600 of the male population of England and Wales proceeded to Oxford or Cambridge as against one in 9000 today ... Grammar schools (public and private) were particularly numerous in this period, and managed to cast a Scriptural and theological colour around ordinary instruction. NEVER WAS THERE IN THE ANNALS OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH A MORE ELOQUENT, PIOUS AND ERUDITE BAND OF ANGLICAN THEOLOGIANS THAN AT THIS TIME. In fact, Selden tells us of his own time: ‘All confess there never was a more learned Clergy’” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Vol. VII Cavalier and Puritan, Part XIII Scholars and Scholarship, 1600–60, “University studies”).

- b. Consider the testimony of J.W. Whittaker, two centuries after the completion of the KJV. In 1820 Whittaker, Fellow of St. John’s, Cambridge, published *An Historical and Critical Enquiry into the Interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, with Remarks on Mr. Bellamy’s New Translation*. It was a brilliant defense of the Authorized Version against John Bellamy’s harsh criticisms. Bellamy had launched a vicious attack on the authenticity of the King James Bible and had made the accusation that the translators of the KJV and its predecessors were not skilled in Hebrew. Whittaker, a Hebrew scholar, carefully described the linguistic excellencies of Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, John Rogers, and the translators of the Great Bible, the Geneva, the Bishops, and the Authorized 1611. Whittaker gave examples from these translations, demonstrating that the versions conformed to the Hebrew rather than to the Greek Septuagint or the Latin Vulgate. He made the following statement about the early 17th century: “Had this gentleman [Bellamy] consulted any historical authority, or in the slightest degree investigated the characters of our translators, he would have found that many of them were celebrated Hebrew scholars, and could not have failed to perceive that THE SACRED LANGUAGE WAS AT THAT TIME CULTIVATED TO A FAR GREATER EXTENT IN ENGLAND THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN SINCE. We have already seen that twelve editions of the Hebrew Bible were printed before the year 1527, four of which were published in one year. Ever since the first dawn of literature in Europe, the study of the Scriptures in the original languages had been an object of the warmest enthusiasm.

The turn which religious controversy took at the birth of the Reformation compelled all learned men to take their authorities from the inspired text, and not from a Romish version. In the year 1540, King Henry the Eighth appointed regular Hebrew Professors, and the consequences of this measure were instantaneous. In Queen Elizabeth's reign no person who pretended to eminence as a learned man was ignorant of this language, and so very common did it become, that the ladies of noble families frequently made it one of their accomplishments. ... Under Queen Elisabeth and King James, who were not only the patrons of learning by their institutions, but examples of it in their own persons, Hebrew literature prospered to a very great extent, and under the last of these monarchs attained its greatest splendour. The Universities, and all public bodies for the promotion of learning, flourished in an extraordinary degree, and AT THIS HAPPY JUNCTURE OUR TRANSLATION WAS MADE. Every circumstance had been conspiring during the whole of the preceding century to extend the study of Hebrew. The attempts of the Papists to check the circulation of the translations, the zeal of the Protestants to expose the Vulgate errors, the novelty of theological speculations to society at large, and even the disputes of the Reformed Churches, GAVE AN ANIMATED VIGOUR TO THE STUDY OF THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES WHICH HAS NEVER SINCE BEEN WITNESSED (Whittaker, pp. 99-104).

- c. Consider the testimony of Alexander McClure, author of *The Translators Revived* (1855): "As to the capability of those men, we may say again, that, by the good providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but THE STUDY OF GREEK, AND OF THE ORIENTAL TONGUES, AND OF RABBINICAL LORE, HAD THEN BEEN CARRIED TO A GREATER EXTENT IN ENGLAND THAN EVER BEFORE OR SINCE" (*The Translators Revived*, pp. 59, 61).
- d. Consider the testimony of James Lister in 1820: "The time when our translation was completed, though two hundred years ago, was remarkable for classical and biblical learning. The classics from the capture of Constantinople, had been revised, and had been studied with enthusiastic ardour in all the countries of Europe. In the century immediately preceding our version, schools and colleges had been multiplied over all the western world. Manuscripts were explored, compared and edited, and correct copies of the ANCIENT AUTHORS, BOTH PROFANE AND SACRED WERE PUBLISHED WITH A ZEAL AND PATIENCE FAR EXCEEDING ANY THING OBSERVABLE IN OUR TIMES. Oriental literature, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac and Greek was deeply studied; and dictionaries, concordances, polyglots, such as the world had never seen before for depth and variety of erudition remain to this day as monuments of the talents, learning and research of our ancestors. Exalted on these monuments, some of our puny scholars, in THESE LATTER DAYS OF GREAT PRETENSION, have taken their lofty stand, and affected to despise the very men by



whom these monuments were reared” (Lister, *The Excellence of the Authorized Version of the Sacred Scriptures Defended against the Socinian*, 1820, p. 14).

2. Biblical scholars of that day grew up with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and were as at home in these languages as in their mother tongue. One of the KJV translators, as we will see, could read the Hebrew Bible at age five. In our day, scholars don’t ordinarily even begin to learn the biblical tongues until adulthood, during their college days or later.

a. Consider the situation at Oxford and Cambridge:

(1) At Oxford and Cambridge in the 1500s and early 1600s, all of the printed texts were in Latin. All of the compositions, lectures, and disputations were in Latin.

(2) In 1605, of the 6,000 volumes in the library at Oxford, only 60 were in English (David Daniell, *Tyndale’s New Testament*, p. 45)

(3) Though Erasmus made five visits to England between 1499 and 1517 and taught at Cambridge for two years, he “neither wrote (nor it seems, spoke) a word of English” (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 130). He was able to communicate and teach in Latin.

b. A similar situation existed throughout the educational field:

“Latin-speaking was well preserved. Brinsley, in his *Ludus Literarius*, 1612, expects school lessons in grammar to be conducted by questions and answers in the Latin language. Disputations and orations were in this language, not only in universities but, also, in grammar schools. ... In fact, Latin occupied very much the position that mathematics now assumes on the modern side of a public school, in relation to physical science studies. It provided the necessary equipment for other studies, and the school curriculum was framed with a view to relieving the university from its teaching. The curriculum consisted of *Pueriles Confabulationes* (children’s Latin talk), colloquies, catechisms in Latin and Greek, systematic grammar, translation and re-translation, and the whole round of vocabularies, the making of Latins, letter-writing (on the model of Cicero’s *Epistulae*, proceeding to those of modern writers—Politian, Erasmus, Ascham, Manutius, Lipsius—and the composition, concurrently, of original epistles), themes, with full equipment of adages, apophthegmata, flores, phrase-books; then making verses, and, finally, the glory of sixth form work, producing and declaiming original orations. Thus, THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN LATIN WAS NEVER MORE COMPLETE THAN IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, 1907–21, Vol. VII, “Cavalier and Puritan,” Part XIII, “Scholars and Scholarship,” 1600–60, “Latin and Greek scholarship”).

- c. Note on becoming a “Fellow”\* of a college at Cambridge or Oxford: There were a severely limited number of Fellow positions in a college and the competition was fierce. It was a much more prestigious and sought after position than it is today. Alexander McClure describes that as “A TIME WHEN THE STUDY OF SACRED LITERATURE WAS PURSUED BY THOUSANDS WITH A ZEAL AMOUNTING TO A PASSION.” It attracted some of the nation’s brightest men. Such an atmosphere in the field of theology exists nowhere in the world today. It could be compared today only to something like the field of sports, in which thousands of athletes compete earnestly from their youth to win a place on a professional team. [A Fellow was a teacher and usually had a company of five or six students and was also involved in college administration -- Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 45.]
- d. The educational climate at Oxford and Cambridge in that day was serious in the extreme. At Emmanuel College, for example, “The recreational schedule consisted only of one hour after dinner at 11 a.m. and one hour after supper at 5 p.m. Undergraduates were expected to be at work ‘in the college’ at all other times” (Opfell, p. 48). For those familiar with conditions in colleges and seminaries today, it is obvious that the level of scholarship has deteriorated significantly; recreation takes up a *much* larger portion of the average student’s time today.

3. The fierce religious debates of that time resulted in zeal for biblical scholarship and caution about the details of biblical translation that has no comparison in our day.

“The time when our authorized version was completed was a time of awful contention between catholics and protestants; a contest in which whole nations were embarked to a man, arranged under their respective civil authorities. Every nerve was strained on both sides to obtain the ascendancy. Learning, talents, piety and zeal rushed forth to the conflict. AND THE MIGHTY FIELD ON WHICH THEY MET WAS, ‘THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES INTO THE VULGAR TONGUES.’ In this fearful combat England stood at the head of the Protestant union; and both sides were fully aware of the incalculable consequences connected with an authorized version of the sacred scriptures into the English tongue. The catholics watched every measure of our government, and put every verse of our translation to the severest scrutiny. The Catholics had already sanctioned the Vulgate, and were prepared to impugn every sentence wherein our version should differ from their authorized text. The mass of protestant learning was engaged on the one side to make our version as fair a copy as possible of the matchless originals; and the mass of popish erudition, on the other side, stood fully prepared to detect every mistake, and to expose without mercy every error of our public version” (James Lister, *The Excellence of the Authorized Version of the Sacred Scriptures Defended against the Socinian*, 1820, pp. 14, 15).

4. Further, it is crucial to understand that biblical scholarship has taken a dramatically rationalistic turn since the 19th century.

- a. Most of the great names in this field have been affected by this spirit of unbelief, including the authors of many of the important lexicons and study aids, such as Joseph Thayer, Samuel Driver, Eberhard Nestle, Hermann von Soden, Gerhard Kittel, Eugene Nida, Kurt and Barbara Aland, and Bruce Metzger. We have documented this sad story in our book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.
- b. In the mid-1800s Charles Philpot, leader of the Gospel Standard Baptists and Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, took up the question of “Who would undertake a revision of the Authorized Version today?” He said: “Of course they must be learned men, great critics, scholars, and divines. BUT THESE ARE NOTORIOUSLY EITHER TAINTED WITH POPERY OR INFIDELITY. Where are the men, learned, yet sound in Truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so important work? And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a Book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.”
- c. In the 20th century, even the “evangelical” scholars became infected with rationalistic views of the Bible, as has been documented in many books, such as Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible* (1976) and *The Bible in the Balance* (1979), Richard Quebedeaux’s *The Worldly Evangelicals* (1978), Francis Schaeffer’s *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (1983), David Wells’s *No Place for Truth* (1993), and Iain Murray’s *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000*. For documentation see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part VII, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because Evangelical Scholarship Is Unreliable.”
- d. The dramatic change that occurred between the 17th century and the 21st is even recognized by men who are not fundamentalists. “The churches and biblical scholarship have, by and large, abandoned the frame of mind which created this translation [the KJV]. The social structures which gave rise to it -- rigid hierarchies; a love of majesty; subservience; an association of power with glory -- have all gone. The belief in the historical and authentic truth of the scriptures, particularly the Gospels, has been largely abandoned, even by the religious. The ferocious intolerances of the pre-liberal world have been left behind ... and perhaps as a result of that change, perhaps as a symptom, religion, or at least the conventional religion of ordinary people, has been drained of its passion. There is no modern language that can encompass the realities which the Jacobean accepted as normal. Modern religious rhetoric is dilute and ineffectual, and where it isn’t, it seems mad and

aberrational. ... These men, and their Bible, exist on the other side of a gulf, which can be labelled liberal, secular, democratic modernity. WE DO NOT LIVE IN THE SAME WORLD” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, 2003, p. 239). Indeed.

## **The Translation Process**

1. The translation began in late 1604 and early 1605 and the final draft from the committees was completed probably in late 1608. In 1609 the delegates from the committees met in Stationers’ Hall in London and reviewed the whole work for nine months. In 1610-11 Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson put the finishing touches to the translation, wrote the Translators Preface, and prepared the Bible for the press.

2. Though, according to the KJV Translators Rule # 1 the Bishops Bible was to be the basis for the revision, Rule #14 set the translators free to use other versions: “These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops: Tindoll’s, Matthews, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s [the Great Bible], Geneva.” “...the Bishops’ Bible is thought to have contributed no more than about 8 percent of its phraseology to the King James Version” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 73).

3. We know that the translators also consulted two new Latin versions (one by Arius Montanus printed in the Antwerp Polyglot in 1575 and the other by Immanuel Tremellius from 1579), plus foreign language Bibles such as the Geneva edition of the Olivetan French Bible, the Diodati Italian Bible, and the Valera Spanish Bible.

4. Each part of the Bible went through four major winnowing processes and was examined at least 14 times.

- a. The translators were divided into six companies, and each group was assigned a portion of Scripture to translate.
  - b. The portion was first translated individually by each member of the company. “Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters; and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinks good...” (rule # 8).
  - c. That translated portion was then considered by the company as a whole. “...all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand” (rule # 8).
- (1) If a special obscurity or difficulty was found, the companies were authorized to “send to any learned in the land for his judgment in such a place” (rule # 11). There is a hint from an extant letter dated Dec. 5, 1608, that this rule was followed. The letter is from William Eyre, Fellow of Emmanuel College,

Cambridge, to a young James Ussher, who would become the famous scholar. “In my absence from Cambridge, there was an order taken from the Kings Mat by the Arch B. of Canterb. That the translation of the Bible shall be finished and printed as soon as may be. Hereupon I am earnestly requested to get again that copy of our part which I lent you for D. Daniel his use. For albeit there be two fair written copies out of it; yet there will be use of it because I noted in the margin ... the places which were doubted of. And this marking of places that want consideration is not in the others” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 150). Here we see three men mentioned in association with the work who were not a part of the official translation committee, and two of them (Ussher and Daniel) were living in Dublin, Ireland, at the time. The volume that Eyre was requesting to be returned was a manuscript book containing the completed translation from one of the companies. We see, then, that copies were made of the manuscript so that it could be distributed to scholars in other places, and they, in turn, wrote their comments in the margin of the manuscript. No doubt this was the custom with each company in accordance with their instructions.

- (2) Learned men not on the translation committee were invited to submit their opinions even if not solicited by the translation committee (rule # 12).
- d. When the companies completed a book, it was then sent to the other five companies for review. “As any one company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously; for his Majesty is very careful in this point” (rule # 9). Thus, each book of the translation was reviewed by all of the companies.
- e. The finished product from each company was then submitted to a 12-man committee (composed of two chief men from each company) for final review and preparation for the press. As the companies reviewed each book, they noted any questions or differences, and these matters were settled by the final committee. “If any company, upon the review of the books so sent, really doubt, or differ upon any place, to send them word thereof, note the place, and withal send their reasons; to which if they consent not, the difference to be compounded at the general meeting, which is to be of the chief persons of each company, at the end of the work” (rule # 10).
- (1) John Selden, the esteemed British jurist and parliamentarian, described the process: “The company of translators would meet together and as the newly translated book was read verse by verse, each one compared it to a Bible in some language in his hand. If any thing struck any of them as requiring alteration, he spoke, otherwise they read on” (“Historical Account of the English Versions of the Scriptures,” prologue to *The English Hexapla*, 1841, quoting *Table-Talk of John Selden*).

- (2) Note that they were testing the translation with their ears. Not only did they aim for accuracy but also for readability. And never has an English Bible sounded lovelier.
- (3) They also aimed for majesty. In his notes John Bois describes a scene in which Andrew Downes suggests a different reading, because “if the words are arranged in this way, the statement will be more majestic.” Nicholson observes that Downes’ “remark is important in showing that majesty was a quality being consciously sought in the Stationers’ Hall. These men are interested not only in clarity and fidelity but in a grandeur of statement which colours the translation as a whole” (p. 212).
- f. Thus, every part of the translation was examined at least 14 times. “As the number of companies was six, and the numbers in each company varied from seven to ten, it follows that every several part would be examined at the least fourteen times distinctly; many parts fifteen times, and some seventeen” (“Historical Account of the English Versions of the Scriptures,” *The English Hexapla*, 1841, p. 153).
- g. The diligence with which the translation was made can be illustrated from an interesting scene that took place not long after it was published. This was recorded by Izaak Walton (author of *The Compleat Angler*) in *The Life of Dr. Robert Sanderson* (1678). One of the KJV translators, Richard Kilby, happened to visit a church and hear a sermon in which the young preacher showed the congregation three reasons why a certain translation in the King James was wrong. It also happened that both men were invited afterwards to the same house, and there Dr. Kilby informed the preacher that the translation committee had considered the three reasons that he had given *but they had found 13 more compelling reasons for overruling them!* Here is the account as given by Walton: “I must here stop my reader, and tell him that this Dr. Kilby was a man of so great learning and wisdom, and so excellent a critic in the Hebrew tongue, that he was made professor of it in this University; and was also so perfect a Grecian, that he was by King James appointed to be one of the translators of the Bible; and that this Doctor and Mr. Sanderson had frequent discourses, and loved as father and son. The Doctor was to ride a journey into Derbyshire, and took Mr. Sanderson to bear him company; and they, resting on a Sunday with the Doctor’s friend, and going together to that parish church where they then were, found the young preacher to have no more discretion, than to waste a great part of the hour allotted for his sermon in exceptions against the late translation of several words, (not expecting such a hearer as Dr. Kilby,) and shewed three reasons why a particular word should have been otherwise translated. When evening prayer was ended, the preacher was invited to the Doctor’s friend’s house, where, after some other conference, the Doctor told him, he might have preached more useful doctrine, and not have filled his auditors’ ear with needless exceptions against the late translation; and for that word for which he offered to that

poor congregation three reasons why it ought to have been translated as he said, he and others had considered all them and found thirteen more considerable reasons why it was translated as now printed; and told him, 'If his friend,' (then attending him,) 'should prove guilty of such indiscretion, he should forfeit his favor.' To which Mr. Sanderson said, 'He hoped he should not.' And the preacher was so ingenuous as to say, 'He would not justify himself.' And so I return to Oxford." Alexander McClure makes an important observation on this story: "It also furnishes an incidental proof of the considerate and patient care with which our venerable Translators studied the verbal accuracy of their work. WHEN WE HEAR YOUNG LICENTIATES, GREEN FROM THE SEMINARY, DISPLAYING THEIR SMATTERINGS OF HEBREW AND GREEK BY CAVILLING IN THEIR SERMONS AT THE COMMON VERSION, AND POMPOUSLY TELLING HOW IT OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN RENDERED, WE CANNOT BUT WISH THAT THE APPARITION OF DR. KILBY'S FROWNING GHOST MIGHT HAUNT THEM. Doubtless the translation is susceptible of improvement in certain places; but this is not a task for every new-fledged graduate; nor can it be very often attempted without shaking the confidence of the common people in our unsurpassed version, and without causing 'the trumpet to give an uncertain sound.'"

5. Lancelot Andrewes' Westminster company usually met in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, where Andrewes was dean.

- a. The Abbey is the church in which the kings of England have been crowned since William I in 1066. It was a Roman Catholic Benedictine Abbey until the Reformation. Since 1540 it has been associated with the Church of England. Many famous people are buried here, including some of England's kings and queens, such as James I, Elizabeth I, and her half sister "bloody Mary," and even secularists such as Charles Darwin, the father of the theory of evolution.
- b. The Jerusalem Chamber was once part of the Abbot's House and was built in the late 14th century. King Henry IV died there. He had been told that he would die in Jerusalem, and while making preparations to travel there, he visited Westminster to pray. While doing so he became sick. His servants moved him to the Jerusalem Chamber and laid him down in front of the large fireplace. When he awakened and was told that he was in the Jerusalem Chamber, he said, "Laud be to the Father of Heaven! for now I know that I shall die in this chamber, according to the prophecy made of me beforesaid, that I should die in Hierusalem."
- c. The Jerusalem Chamber is not open to the public, but we were able to view it during a research trip in 2003. David L. Brown arranged for us to see it by private appointment. We were allowed to take some video and still shots of the Chamber as well as of the inside of the Abbey itself, including the Darwin grave marker on the floor, which is not usually allowed.

- d. The room features a large white fireplace with an intricately carved cedar wood overmantel and tapestries of Bible scenes that go back, in some cases, to the 16th century. The original ornate ceiling still exists.

6. Unlike the committee that produced the English Revision of 1881, the translators of the King James Bible obeyed their instructions. Ward Allen, who examined the history of the King James extensively and broke new ground with material that he found at the Lambeth Palace Library (some of the working sheets apparently from a late stage in the revision), concluded that the translators “worked according to their instructions” (Ward Allen, *Translating for King James*, p. lxxxiii). After examining John Bois’ notes (which were discovered by American scholar E. E. Willoughby in the mid-1950s at the Bodleian Library at Oxford) and all other surviving materials, Allen described the process: “Each translator completed his revision of a chapter week by week, and each company forged a common revision by comparing these private revisions. This revision being completed, a company circulated its work, book by book, among the other companies. From this circulation there resulted revisions, made in the light of objections raised to the work of a company, and an excursus upon any objection which the original company did not agree to. Then the translators circulated their work among the learned men, who were not official translators, and revised their work in view of suggestions from these men. Now the translators had to circulate these revisions among the other companies. Then, they prepared a final text. This final text they submitted to the general meeting in London, which spent nine months compounding disagreements among companies” (Allen, *Translating the New Testament Epistles 1604-1611: A Manuscript from King James’s Westminster Company*, pp. xli-xlii).

## The Translators

1. The translators were divided into six companies, two at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two in London at Westminster. (The exact number of translators is unknown. The following list contains 51 names. Gustavus Paine, author of *The Men Behind the King James Version*, said that he found the names of more than 54 translators if replacements are counted. Further, “the final version contains contributions from countless unknown linguists.”)

First Westminster Company (translated Genesis to 2 Kings): Lancelot Andrewes, John Overall, Hadrian Saravia, Richard Clarke, John Laifield, Robert Tighe, Francis Burleigh, Geoffry King, Richard Thompson, William Bedwell

First Cambridge Company (translated 1 Chronicles to the Song of Solomon): Edward Lively, John Richardson, Lawrence Chaderton, Francis Dillingham, Roger Andrews, Thomas Harrison, Robert Spaulding, Andrew Bing

First Oxford Company (translated Isaiah through Malachi): John Harding, John Reynolds, Thomas Holland, Richard Kilby, Miles Smith, Richard Brett, Daniel Fairclough



Second Oxford Company (translated the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation): Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, Richard Eedes, Giles Tomson, Henry Savile, John Peryn, Ralph Ravens, John Harmar

Second Westminster Company (translated the Epistles): William Barlow, John Spencer, Roger Fenton, Ralph Hutchinson, William Dakins, Michael Rabbet, Thomas Sanderson

Second Cambridge Company (translated the Apocrypha): John Duport, William Brainthwaite, Jeremiah Radcliffe, Samuel Ward, Andrew Downes, John Bois, John Ward, John Aglionby, Leonard Hutten, Thomas Bilson, Richard Bancroft. [Note: Bois participated in both companies at Cambridge, the one assigned the Apocryphal books and the one assigned Chronicles to Song of Solomon. He was also one of the translators who did the final editing at Stationer's Hall in London.]

2. The translators of the King James Bible were scholars of the highest caliber. Some of them were among the very top scholars of England and Europe.

- a. The translators were masters of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. That was a basic part of what was called a classical education in those days. These men grew up with the biblical languages and Latin. They learned these in their childhood and perfected the use of them throughout their lives. This is not true today. Ordinarily, even those who are scholars in the biblical languages don't begin to learn them until their adult years.
- b. The KJV translators as a whole were masters not only of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin but also of the cognate or associate languages that are necessary for research into ancient documents relative to the Bible. These include Persian, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, and Chaldee.
- c. They further had the ability to read ancient unprinted manuscript versions of Greek, Latin, German, Italian, and Spanish. It is one thing to read modern German or modern Latin; it is far more difficult to read ancient versions of these language and much more difficult yet to read these in the handwritten manuscripts. These men were accustomed to such research inasmuch as in their day many scholarly resources had not yet been printed and it was common to have to use handwritten manuscripts in the pursuit of ordinary study. Since the invention of the typewriter scholars have had dramatically less familiarity with handwritten manuscripts. The common scholar of the 17th century had a level of expertise in such things that is found only in the rarest of cases today, if at all.
- d. Following are some examples of the quality of the translators' scholarship and a few

snippets from some of their lives. They are listed alphabetically rather than by company. Note that we have also included information that we have found on the memorials of the translators, such as burial places, surviving portraits, and published works.

Miscellaneous introductory points:

- (1) “The choice of revisers seems to have been determined solely by their fitness, and both parties in the Church were represented by some of their best men” (Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, p. 53).
- (2) Only three of the men assigned to the KJV translation committee in 1604 were bishops.
- (3) Most of the translators were Fellows of colleges at Oxford or Cambridge and a dozen were heads of colleges. The translators included the Regius [king’s] professors of Hebrew and Greek in both universities. These appointments went to the most skilled linguists in the land.
- (4) Most had the highest degrees. “The successive degrees of the greater part of the persons belonging to the list of Translators could be given; but are omitted for the sake of brevity. It is enough to record, that they nearly all attained to the highest literary honors of their respective universities” (Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived: Biographical Notes on the KJV Translators*, 1855).

GEORGE ABBOT (1562-1633), doctor of divinity, was Master of University College, Oxford, and thrice elected Vice Chancellor of the University. He grew up in a godly home. His parents embraced the Word of God in the days of Edward VI and were persecuted during the reign of Mary (Thomas Fuller, *The Church History of Britain*). Abbot was a Puritan who eventually became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1611. One of his brothers was Master of Balliol College. As archbishop of Guildford, Abbot founded a hospital that is still there today. Abbot was one of the excellent writers on the committee. On the fading of earthly life he wrote: “[R]emember how that every winter the glory of the trees and all the woods is decayed; their leaves lie in the dust, their cheerful green is but blackness--the sap and life is held in the root within the ground--all the tree doth seem dead” (Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 158). On sin he wrote: “[Sin] is like a smoke, like fire, it mounteth upward, and comes even before God to accuse us; it is like a serpent in our bosom, still ready to sting us; it is the devil’s daughter. A woman hath her pains in travail and delivery but rejoiceth when she seeth a child is born; but the birth of sin is of a contrary fashion; for all the pleasure is in the bringing forth, but when it is finished and brought forth, it

tormenteth us continually; they haunt us like tragical furies” (Ibid.). Abbot published *A Brief Description of the Whole World* (1599). He opposed King James’ 1618 “Declaration of Sports,” which permitted Sunday games. The king “declared that the Puritan Sabbath had resulted in two evils--the hindering of the conversion of many Catholics and the physical deterioration of ‘the common and meaner sort of people’ who in place of exercise set up ‘filthy tiplings and drunkenness’” (Opfell, p. 84). (The Puritan idea that Sunday is the new Sabbath is unscriptural.) Abbot’s tomb is in Holy Trinity Church, Guildford. The great oak doors of the hospital he established “are painted in scarlet and gold and the mitre and the insignia of three gold pears are those of the Archbishop Abbot.” Also there is a large statue of Abbot at the top of the High Street in Guildford.

JOHN AGLIONBY (1566-1611) was Principal of St. Edmund’s Hall, Oxford, and chaplain to Queen Elizabeth as well as to King James. He was “an excellent linguist.” Anthony Wood in *Athanae* wrote that “he had a most considerable hand in the Translation of the New Testament, appointed by King James I., in 1604.” He died at his rectory at Islip and “in the chancel of his church at Islip, is a tablet erected to his memory by his widow” (McClure).

LANCELOT ANDREWES (1568-1626) was Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth, Dean of Westminster Abbey, bishop of Chichester (from 1605) and bishop of Ely (from 1609). A “formidable scholar,” he was the master of 15 languages. “Scholars of the greatest eminence, such as Casaubon, Grotius, and Vossius, have eulogised his extensive attainments.” Of Andrewes, it was said that “such was his skill in all languages, especially the Oriental, that, had he been present at the confusion of tongues at Babel, he might have served as Interpreter-General.” “Once a year, at Easter, he used to pass a month with his parents. During this vacation, he would find a master, from whom he learned some language to which he was before a stranger. In this way after a few years, he acquired most of the modern languages of Europe” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Further, “Young Andrewes eschewed ‘games or ordinary recreations’ and preferred walking by himself or with a selected companion ‘with whom he might confer and argue and recount their studies’” (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 28). Is this how the average contemporary Bible scholar spends his teenage years? Is it not, rather, spent on rock & roll, video games, television, Hollywood movies, dating, and other carnal activities, perhaps glossed over with a veneer of churchianity? Andrewes’ friends included many famous men of literature, including Francis Bacon, Isaac Casaubon, and John Chamberlain. On trips to northern England, sponsored by the Earl of Huntingdon, he saw many converted to the Word of God through his preaching. McClure says he was called the “star of preachers.” Thomas Fuller says that he was “an inimitable preacher in his way.” There was music in his preaching and doubtless some of Andrewes’ lyrical music passed

into the King James Bible. Here is an excerpt from a sermon on Christmas 1609: “Men may talk what they will, but sure there is no joy in the world to the joy of a man saved: no joy so great, no news so welcome, as to one ready to perish, in case of a lost man, to hear of one that will save him. In danger of perishing by sickness, to hear of one will make him well again; by sentence of the law, of one with a pardon to save his life; by enemies, of one that will rescue and set him in safety. Tell any of these, assure them but of a Saviour. It is the best news he ever heard in his life.” He spent many hours each day in private prayer and devotion and family worship and was “given to hospitality.” In 1610 Andrewes, apparently at the urging of King James, published *Responsio ad Apologiam Cardinalis Bellarmine*, which was a reply to the Roman Catholic Jesuit apologist. Andrewes died in 1626 at age 61 and was buried at Southwark Cathedral (Church of St. Saviour and St. Mary Overie), London, where William Shakespeare is buried. John Milton of *Paradise Lost* fame eulogized Andrewes in a Latin poem. There is a portrait of Andrewes in the chapel at Ely House, London (<http://ely.anglican.org/history/talk19990209/andrewes.html>).

WILLIAM BEDWELL (1562-1632), educated at St. John’s College, Cambridge, and Vicar of Tottenham High Cross, London, was an eminent Arabic scholar. “His fame for Arabic learning was so great, that when Erpenius, a most renowned Orientalist, resided in England, in 1606, he was much indebted to Bedwell for direction in his studies. To Bedwell, rather than to Erpenius, who commonly enjoys it, belongs the honor of being the first who considerably promoted and revived the study of the Arabic language and literature in Europe. He was also tutor to another Orientalist of renown, Dr. Pococke” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). “He spent many years in preparing an Arabic lexicon; and the commencement of a Persian dictionary and an Arabic Translation of the Catholic Epistles of St. John, by the same scholar, are still preserved among the Laud MSS in the Bodleian Library.”

THOMAS BILSON (d. 1616), Fellow of New College, Oxford, was made Bishop of Winchester in 1599. “Anthony Wood proclaims him so ‘complete in divinity, so well skilled in languages, so read in the Fathers and Schoolmen, so judicious in making use of his readings that at length he was found to be no longer a soldier, but a commander in chief in the spiritual warfare, especially became a bishop!’” (McClure). Bilson is called “that eminent light in all learning” (*The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*) and was described by Anthony Wood as being “as reverend and learned a prelate as England ever afford.” Bilson wrote *True Difference between Christian Subjects and Unchristian Rebellion* and the theologically abberant *Survey of Christ’s Sufferings and Descent into Hell*. His work entitled *The Perpetual Government of Christ’s Church* (1593) “is still regarded as one of the ablest books ever written in behalf of Episcopacy” (McClure). He is buried in Westminster Abbey.

ANDREW BING (1574-1652), Fellow of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, succeeded Geoffrey King as Regius Professor of Hebrew. Bing probably outlived all of the other KJV translators. He would have witnessed the beheading of James' son Charles I and the rise of Oliver Cromwell. He died in March 1652 at Winterton in Norfolk.

JOHN BOIS (Boys) (1561-1643), Fellow of Clare Hall College, Cambridge, had a good spiritual heritage. His father William was converted under the ministry of the Lutheran reformer Martin Bucer when he was exiled from Strasbourg, Germany, and was teaching at Cambridge; and William had subsequently hid out in the countryside during the reign of Mary. During those days he met and married Mirable Poolye, "a pious woman, and a great reader of the Bible in the older translations," and they had several children, all of which died young except John. When John was at Cambridge he would often walk the 20 miles to his mother's house for dinner and return again in the evening. The respect that he had for his mother is evident in what he wrote in the flyleaf to her Book of Common Prayer: "This is my mother's book; my good mother's book. Her name was first Mirable Poolye; and then afterwards Mirable Bois; being so called by the name of her husband, my father, William Bois. ... She had read the Bible over twelve times, and the Book of Martyrs twice; besides other books, not a few." Taught by his father, John could read the whole Bible in Hebrew at age five. Within six months of admission to St. John's College, Cambridge, the 14-year-old Bois was writing letters in Greek to the Master and Senior Fellows of the school. "It was a common practice with the young enthusiast to go to the University Library at four o'clock in the morning, and stay without intermission till eight in the evening" (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Bois was an exact grammarian who had read sixty grammars (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 67). Bois was a Greek lecturer at St. John's College for 10 years, and "during that time, he voluntarily lectured, in his own chamber, at four o'clock in the morning, most of the Fellows being in attendance! It may be doubted, whether, at the present day, a teacher and class so zealous could be found at old Cambridge, new Cambridge, or any where else,--not excluding laborious Germany." At one point he determined to study medicine, but finding that "whatever disease he read of, he was troubled with the same himself," he gave it up! When Bois was 35 years old, the Rector of Boxworth, Mr. Holt, left in his will an unusual request. He wanted Bois to succeed him as vicar of Boxworth on the condition that he would marry his daughter. The scholar drove his buggy over to meet the girl and after some visits and "taking liking each of other" he agreed to the arrangement. In 1596 Bois became Rector of Boxworth, and two years later the now thirty-seven- or thirty-eight-year-old bookworm married the late Rector's daughter. "While thus absorbed in studious pursuits he left his domestic affairs to the management of his wife, whose want of skill in a few

years reduced him to bankruptcy. He was forced to part with his chief treasure, and to sell his library, which contained one of the most complete and costly collections of Greek literature that had ever been made. This cruel loss so disheartened him, as almost to drive the poor man from his family and his native country. He was, however, sincerely attached to his wife, with whom he lived in great happiness and affection for five and forty years.” Even with the late start, the Bois’s were not slack in producing children. They had four sons and two daughters. Bois told them “funny and delightful stories after supper” and prayed with each of them every day. One died in infancy; two in their teens; another at age 30. Only two survived their father. Robert and Mirabel (named for his mother) died in 1623 within a month of each other, of smallpox. The heartbroken father wrote, “Never has there been a more bitter night for me than that in which my Mirabel died.” Bois made almost daily trips from Boxworth to Cambridge, and allowing his horse to find his own way he would use the occasion to study! Bois was charitable to the poor, but wise in his charity. “He ‘chode the lazy,’ knowing that charity’s eyes should be open, as well as her hands.” Bois participated in both companies at Cambridge, the one assigned the Apocryphal books and the one assigned Chronicles to Song of Solomon. Even in his old age, Bois spent eight hours in daily study. Though a great scholar, he aimed for simplicity in his preaching, desiring to make himself easily understood by the humblest of his hearers. “Up to his death, his brow was unwrinkled, his sight clear, his hearing quick, his countenance fresh, and head not bald.” Asked the secret of his longevity, the octogenarian ascribed it to the observance of three rules, given him by one of his college tutors, Dr. Whitaker: First, always to study standing; secondly, never to study in a draft of air; and thirdly, never to go to bed with his feet cold! He also ate only two meals a day, dinner at midday and supper in the evening, and didn’t take any food and little drink between meals, except on occasion, “upon trouble of wind a small quantity of *aqua-vitae* [a brandy-like spirit] and sugar.” We are not told how often he had wind trouble.

WILLIAM BRAINTHWAITE (b. 1563), one of the first Fellows at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, was Master of Gonvil and Caius College, Cambridge when appointed to the translation work. In 1619 he was elected Vice Chancellor of the University. He was often praised for his extensive knowledge of Greek and was also skilled in Hebrew (Opfell, p. 68). Brainthwaite’s library can be seen today at Conville and Caius College library, filling one entire bay.

RICHARD BRETT (1567-1637), Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and doctor of divinity. “He was skilled and versed to a criticism in the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, and Ethiopic tongues” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). He was Rector of Quanton church in Buckinghamshire and was buried in the chancel there. His stone shows him, his widow and his four daughters, all kneeling.

LAWRENCE CHADERTON (1537-1640) grew up in a staunch Catholic home and his wealthy father wanted him to be a lawyer. Upon being converted to Christ in 1564, Lawrence abandoned his law studies to attend Christ's College, Cambridge. When he wrote to his father to request some assistance, the "old papist" wrote, "Son Lawrence, if you will renounce the new sect which you have joined, you may expect all the happiness which the care of an indulgent father can assure you; otherwise, I enclose a shilling to buy a wallet. Go and beg." When Lawrence replied that he could not give up his faith in the Word of God, his father disinherited him of the large estate; but by God's grace he never had to beg (Ps. 37:25). He was thoroughly skilled in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Italian, and was thoroughly acquainted with the writings of the Jewish rabbis. He was a Puritan and the first Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, which was founded in 1584 and was established with the intent that students would not only study but would "go out and spread knowledge in all parts of the country" (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 28). McClure says: "Having reached his three score years and ten, his knowledge was fully digested, and his experience matured, while 'his natural force was not abated,' and his faculties burned with unabated fire. Even to the close of his long life, 'his eye was not dim,' and his sight required no artificial aid. ... He was greatly venerated. All his habits were such as inspired confidence in his piety. During the fifty-three years of his married life, he never suffered any of his servants to be detained from public worship by the preparation of food, or other household cares. He used to say, 'I desire as much to have my servants to know the Lord, as myself'" (McClure, *Translators Revived*). As a young man Chaderton began a series of afternoon sermons at the church of St. Clement's, Cambridge, that continued for 50 years. "Sermons were timed by an hour glass, which stood beside the pulpit. Chaderton's biographer tells how once having preached for two hours, he feared he had worn out his listeners' patience and stopped. But the entire congregation cried, 'For God's sake, go on! We beg you, go on!' Chaderton continued for another hour" (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 47). When he announced that he was retiring from these lectures, forty of the clergy, who said they owed their conversion to his preaching, begged him to reconsider. Two of Chaderton's brothers-in-law, Samuel and Ezekiel Culverwell, became famous Puritan preachers (Opfell, p. 47). He died in the year 1640 in the one hundred and third year of his age, and it is said that to the end he could read a small-print Greek New Testament without glasses. There is a Latin epitaph to Chaderton at the entrance of the Emmanuel College chapel. Translated it says, "Here lies the body of Lawrence Chaderton, D.D., who was the first Master of this College."

RICHARD CLARKE was a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, vicar on the island of Thanet, and one of the six preachers in Canterbury Cathedral. The following quote from one of his sermons illustrates how dramatically different

those times were compared to modern times: “There are two sorts of atheism, mental and vocal. ... I pardon the mouth atheist. For he that shall openly say, There is no God, will *ipso facto* be thought beside himself. Or if he seem to have his wits, yet they that hear him will abhor him; they will stop their ears against his blasphemy, they will hiss at him, they will spit at him; his impious assertion shall not stumble any one. But the heart atheist that saith God is, but thinks it not, and lives accordingly, ungodlily, unrighteously, unsoberly ... his sin is greater than his hypocrisy” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 41).

WILLIAM DAKINS (d. 1607) a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was appointed Professor of Divinity at Gresham College, London, in 1604. He was considered peculiarly fit to be employed in the translation work, on account of “his skill in the original languages” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). He died two yeasers after being appointed junior dean of Trinity College, Cambridge.

FRANCIS DILLINGHAM (d. 1625), a Fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge (McClure), was a Puritan (Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*). He was a famous Greek disputer and was called “the great Grecian” and “an excellent linguist.” “Francis Dillingham was a diligent writer, both of practical and polemical divinity. He collected out of [Catholic] Cardinal Bellarmine’s writings, all the concessions made by that acute author in favor of Protestantism. He published a Manual of the Christian faith, taken from the Fathers, and a variety of treatises on different points belonging to the Romish controversy” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). One of his books was titled *A Dissuasive against Popery*. In another (*A Quartron of Reasons, Composed by Dr. Hill, Unquartered, and Proved a Quartron of Follies*), Dillingham refuted the Catholic doctrine of celibacy. In *A Golden Key Opening the Lock to Eternal Happiness*, Dillingham gave suggestions for how to choose a wise wife: “That a man may obtain a wife that will be in subjection unto him, he must choose a prudent and wise wife, for prudence and wisdom respecteth persons, place, and manner of doing a thing. ... Prudence teacheth the wife that her husband is her head, and so subjecteth herself unto him. No marvel then though many men have not their wives in subjection, for they have married fools which know not their place ... A wise woman, saith Solomon ... buildeth the house, but the foolish destroyeth it with her own hands.” Dillingham must not have found his wise woman, for he never married.

ANDREW DOWNES (1544-1625) was for 40 years Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. “He is especially named by the renowned John Selden as eminently qualified to share in the translation of the Bible. Thus it is the happiness of Dr. Downes to be ‘praised by a praised man;’ for no man was ever more exalted for learning and critical scholarship than Selden, who was styled by Dr. Johnson, ‘monarch in letters,’ and by Milton, ‘chief of learned men in England;’ and by



foreigners, ‘the great dictator of learning of the English nation.’ His decisive testimony to Downes’s ability was given from personal knowledge” (McClure, *Translators Revived*).

JOHN DUPORT (d. 1617) held the position of Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, for 30 years. Four times he was elected Vice Chancellor of the University. His son James was a distinguished Greek professor. Duport’s father-in-law, Bishop Richard Cox of Ely (1501-81) was one of the translators of the Bishops Bible.

ROGER FENTON (1566-1616) was a Fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. He was Penitentiary of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London and was rector of Chigwell, in Essex. His friend Nicholas Felton, bishop of Ely, testified, “Never a more learned hath Pembroke Hall brought forth, with but one exception,” and that exception was Lancelot Andrews. Fenton’s main printed work was *A Treatise on Usury* (three volumes, 1611).

JOHN HARDING, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, had been Royal Professor of Hebrew for 13 years at the time he was selected for the translation committee. “His occupancy of that chair, at a time when the study of sacred literature was pursued by thousands with a zeal amounting to a passion, is a fair intimation that Dr. Harding was the man for the post he occupied” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). He was John Reynolds’ father in law.

JOHN HARMER (1555?-1613) was a Warden of St. Mary’s College, Oxford, and King’s Professor of Greek. He was a canon of Winchester Cathedral. He accompanied the Earl of Leicester to Paris where he debated Roman Catholic doctors of the Sorbonne. Wood says that he was “a most noted Latinist, Grecian, and Divine.” “He stood high in the crowd of tall scholars, the literary giants of the time. He published several learned works; among them, Latin translations of several of Chrysostom’s writings,--also an excellent translation of Beza’s French Sermons into English, by which he shows himself to have been a Calvinist, the master of an excellent English style, and an adept in the difficult art of translating” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). Harmer traveled to Europe and held disputations with “great doctors of the Romish party” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 111).

THOMAS HARRISON (1555-1632?), a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was a Puritan (Nicholson). “On account of his exquisite skill in the Hebrew and Greek idioms, he was one of the chief examiners in the University of those who sought to be public professors of these languages” (McClure).

THOMAS HOLLAND (1539-1612), a “deciding non-conforming Puritan,” was appointed King’s Professor of Divinity in 1589 and Regent at Exeter College,

Oxford, in 1592. Known as a “prodigy of literature,” his reputation extended to the continent, and he was held in high esteem in the universities of Europe” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). It is said that whenever he went on a journey he would gather together the fellows of the college and exhort them, “I commend you to the love of God, and to the hatred of popery and superstition.” On his deathbed he cried out: “Come, Oh come, Lord Jesus, thou bright and morning star! Come, Lord Jesus; I desire to be dissolved and be with thee.” He was buried in the chancel of St. Mary’s College, Oxford.

RALPH HUTCHINSON (1553-1606), doctor of divinity, had been president of St. John’s College, Oxford, for 14 years when he was appointed to the translation work. After his death his widow placed his effigy in stone in the St. John’s College chapel.

LEONARD HUTTON (1557-1632), was educated at St. John’s College, Oxford, and was vicar of Floore, Northamptonshire and subdean of Christ Church. Hutton is buried at Christ Church, Cambridge.

RICHARD KILBY (1560-1620) was a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and became Rector of the college in 1590 and doctor of divinity in 1596. In 1601 he was made a Prebend of Westminster Abbey. “He was considered so accurate in Hebrew studies, that he was appointed the King’s Professor in that branch of literature. Among the fruits of his studies, he left a commentary on Exodus, chiefly drawn from the writings of the rabbinical interpreters” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). In his sermon on “The Burden of a Loaden Conscience,” we see Kilby’s gospel: “Consider well what He hath done for you. He made you at the first like unto Himself, in wisdom and holiness, and when you were by sin made like the devil, and must therefore have been condemned to hell torments, God sent His only son who taking unto him a body and soul, was a man and suffered great wrong and shameful death, to secure your pardon, and to buy you out of the devil’s bondage, that ye might be renewed to the likeness of God ... to the end ye might be fit to keep company with all saints in the joys of heaven” (Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 48).

GEOFFREY KING (d. 1630), of King’s College, Cambridge, was Regius Professor of Hebrew.

JOHN LAIFIELD (or Layfield) (d. 1617) was Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Rector of St. Clement Dane’s Church in London (in the Strand). Of him it is said “that being skilled in architecture, his judgment was much relied on for the fabric of the tabernacle and temple” (Collin’s *Ecclesiastical History*, 1852, Vol. VII, p. 337; cited from Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 39). Laifield had traveled to Puerto Rico in 1598 as chaplain to Earl of Cumberland

and had written of the dangerous adventure during which hundreds had died through sickness and combat. In this interesting record it is obvious that Laifield wielded an exceptional pen: “The trees do continually maintain themselves in a green-good liking, partly of many fine rivers, which to requite the shadow and coolness they receive from the trees, give them back again, a continual refreshing of very sweet and tasty water” (taken from *God’s Secretaries*, p. 104).

EDWARD LIVELY (or Livlie) (1545?-1605), Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was Regius Professor of Hebrew from 1575. He was one of the eminent scholars not only of Hebrew but also of other oriental languages. “Ussher, Eyre, Pocock, and Gataker speak in eulogistic terms of Lively’s attainments as a Hebrew scholar” (from Lively’s funeral sermon by Thomas Playfere). He was one of the three directors of the translation work. Among other things he wrote *A True Chronologie of the True Times of the Persian Monarchie and after to the Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans* (London, 1597); a commentary on the Hebrew grammar of Peter Martinus (*Commentationes in Martinium*, manuscript in the Cambridge University Library), and a *Treatise Touching the Canonical Books of the Old Testament* (manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Dublin). He died on May 7, 1605, and was buried at St. Edwards College, Cambridge, leaving behind eleven orphan children, five of them sons, “destitute of necessities for their maintenance, but only such as God, and good friends, should provide.”

JOHN OVERALL (1559-1619) was Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, King’s Professor of Divinity, and Master of Catharine Hall. When he was made Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London in 1601 and had to preach in English before Queen Elizabeth, he told the father of the historian Thomas Fuller that “he had spoken Latin so long, it was troublesome to him to speak English in a continued oration.” It is obvious that he could write well in English, though, as the following excerpt demonstrates: “I was requested to come visit some of my parish that were sick, and coming I found them sicker in mind than body. The thing that troubled their minds, so they said, was this. They could not be persuaded that Christ died for them. Wherein, having by the comforts of the gospel as I thought best, somewhat eased and persuaded them I took occasion afterward in my sermon, for their sakes, to handle this point” (Opfell, p. 33). Overall was considered by some “the most scholarly divine in England.” “He was styled by Camden ‘a prodigious learned man;’ and is said by Fuller to have been ‘of a strong brain to improve his great reading’” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). He died in Norwich, where he had been made bishop in 1618.

JOHN PERYN (d. 1615), a doctor of divinity, was Fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, and Canon of Christ’s Church

College. He was also Vicar of Watling in Sussex. He resigned his post as professor to work on the translation.

JEREMIAH RADCLIFFE (d. 1612) was senior Fellow and vice-Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and had been made Doctor of Divinity both at Cambridge and Oxford in 1600.

THOMAS RAVIS (1560?-1609), doctor of divinity, was the president of the Oxford company responsible for Isaiah to Malachi. In 1593 he was appointed Dean of Christ's Church College, Oxford, and twice was elected Vice-Chancellor of the University. In 1604 he was appointed bishop of Gloucester and in 1607 bishop of London. "He very strongly opposed the Romanising influence of Laud and was very severe in his denunciation of anything which savoured of popery." He opposed the king's declaration permitting sports and recreational pastimes on Saturday.

JOHN RAINOLDS (or Reynolds) (1549-1607), the leader of the Puritan party at Hampton Court, was president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. He had become a Fellow of Corpus Christi at age 17 and a Greek lecturer at age 23. McClure observes: "It is stated that 'his memory was little less than miraculous. He could readily turn to any material passage, in every leaf, page, column and paragraph of the numerous and voluminous works he had read. He came to be styled 'the very treasury of erudition;' and was spoken of as 'a living library, and a third university.'" "This Dr. Reynolds was party to a most curious episode. He had been an ardent Roman Catholic, and he had a brother who was an equally ardent Protestant. They argued with each other so earnestly that each convinced the other; the Roman Catholic became a Protestant, and the Protestant became a Roman Catholic" (Ian Paisley, *My Plea for the Old Sword*). John Rainolds' Catholic brother, William, taught divinity and Hebrew at the English College at Rheims and probably assisted Gregory Martin in the translation of the Rheims-Douay Catholic Bible that was published in 1610 (Opfell, p. 56). Rainolds not only became a Protestant, he became one of England's greatest champions for Protestantism. "About the year 1578, John Hart, a popish zealot, challenged all the learned men in the nation to a public debate. At the solicitation of one of Queen Elizabeth's privy counsellors, Mr. Reynolds encountered him. After several combats, the Romish champion owned himself driven from the field. An account of the conferences, subscribed by both parties, was published, and widely circulated. This added greatly to the reputation of Mr. Reynolds, who soon after took his degrees in divinity, and was appointed by the queen to be Royal Professor of Divinity in the University. At that time, the celebrated Cardinal Bellarmine, the Goliath of the philistines at Rome, was professor of theology in the English Seminary at that city. As fast as he delivered his popish doctrine, it was taken down in writing, and regularly sent to Dr. Reynolds; who,

from time to time, publicly confuted it at Oxford. Thus Bellarmine's books were answered, even before they were printed" (McClure, *Translators Revived*). In 1586 "Sir Francis Walsingham founded a temporary lectureship to confute 'popish tenets' and secured Rainolds' appointment to those lectures" (Opfell, p. 58). It was suspected that an attempt was made on Rainolds' life, perhaps by "the papists," when an arrow was shot at him as he was walking in London in 1602, though the arrow failed to enter his body. At the height of the popularity of Shakespearean productions, Rainolds wrote a book against stage plays. His warning was plain and very much to the point: "They meditate how they may inflame a tender youth with love, entice him to dalliance, to whoredom, to incest, inure their minds and bodies to uncomely, dissolute, railing, boasting, knavish, foolish, brainsick, drunken conceits, words and gestures" (Rainolds, "The Overthrow of Stage Plays," cited from Paine, *The Men Behind the KJV*, p. 24). Rainolds warned that it was unlawful for men to wear women's clothing on the stage and cited Deuteronomy 22:5. Though he died before the translation was complete, he worked at it during his last sickness as long as his strength permitted. "During his decline, the company to which he belonged met regularly every week in his chamber, to compare and perfect what they had done in their private studies. His days were thought to be shortened by too intense application to study." When urged to cease his labors he nobly replied that "for the sake of life, he would not lose the very end of living!" As he was dying, a rumor was spread by some Roman Catholics that he had renounced Protestantism. Replying the day before he expired, he wrote the following: "These are to testify to all the world, that I die in the possession of that faith which I have taught all my life, both in my preachings and in my writings, with an assured hope of my salvation, only by the merits of Christ my Saviour." John Rainolds is buried in the chapel of Corpus Christi College and a statue there depicts the scholar holding a closed book.

JOHN RICHARDSON (1564?-1625), Master of Peterhouse College (1608-15) and later of Trinity College, Cambridge, was King's Professor of Divinity. Twice elected Vice-Chancellor of the University (1617, 1618), he was described as a "most excellent linguist." He is buried in the chapel at Trinity College.

HADRIAN SARAVIA (1530 or 1531-1612). Born in France, Saravia's father was Spanish and his mother Belgian. While living in Belgium from 1577 to 1587, he was Professor of Divinity at the University of Leyden. He also founded the Walloon church in Brussels and took part in drawing up the Walloon confession of faith and was the pastor of the French Reformed Church in Leyden. He came to England in 1587 and was made Doctor of Divinity at Oxford in 1590. He became Prebend of Canterbury and Canon of Westminster. He was "educated in all kinds of literature in his younger days, especially in several languages" and noted for his knowledge of Hebrew. In 1591 he wrote *De Diversis Gradibus*

*Ministrorum Evangelii (Concerning the Diverse Positions of Ministers of the Gospel)* in which he defended the episcopal form of church government and also “stressed the importance of preaching the gospel in foreign lands, one of the first churchmen to do so” (Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 34).

HENRY SAVILE (or Saville) (1549-1621), Warden of Merton College, Oxford, and Provost of Eton College, was “a weighty Greek scholar.” He was the first to edit the complete works of Chrysostom (with help from others). Toward this end he searched out the best manuscripts of Chrysostom’s works throughout Europe and assembled more than 15,000 sheets of them, which he gave to the Bodleian Library at Oxford. “Sir Henry Savile was one of the most profound, exact, and critical scholars of his age. In 1570, he read his ordinaries on the *Almagest* of Ptolemy, a collection of the geometrical and astronomical observations and problems of the ancients. By this exercise he very early became famous for his Greek and mathematical learning.” He was the tutor in Greek and mathematics to Queen Elizabeth. In about 1604 he was knighted by King James. One of his sayings was: “Give me the plodding student. If I would look for wits, I would go to Newgate [prison];--there be the wits!” Saville founded two professorships at Oxford, one of geometry and one of astronomy. Many of his books remain at the Bodleian Library. Sir Henry and his wife Margaret had two children, a boy and a girl, but the boy died at age eight. In finishing up this brief review of Savile’s life, I must include an account given by Alexander McClure, which most studious husbands and most wives of studious husbands can doubtless relate to: “He was so much of a book-worm, and so sedulous at his study, that his lady, who was not very deep in such matters, thought herself neglected. She once petulantly said to him, ‘Sir Henry, I would that I were a book, and then you would a little more respect me.’ A person standing by was so ungallant as to reply, ‘Madam, you ought to be an almanac, that he might change at the year’s end.’ At this retort the lady was not a little offended. A little before the publication of Chrysostom, when Sir Henry lay sick, Lady Savile said, that if Sir Henry died, she would burn Chrysostom for killing her husband. To this, Mr. Bois, who rendered Sir Henry much assistance in that laborious undertaking, meekly replied, that ‘so to do were great pity.’ To him, the lady said, ‘Why, who was Chrysostom?’ ‘One of the sweetest preachers since the apostles’ times,’ answered the enthusiastic Bois. Whereupon the lady was much appeased, and said, ‘she would not burn him for all the world.’” He was buried in the chapel at Eton College, Oxford. “There is a large monument, with portrait bust resting on a southern hemisphere and statuettes of Ptolemy and Euclid, on the west wall of Merton Antechapel, near the south door. His portrait in the Bodleian [Library Picture Gallery] was presented by his widow” (<http://www.dcs.warwick.ac.uk/bshm/zingaz/OxfordPeople.html#e3>). There is a portrait of Savile in Oxford’s Museum of the History of Science.

MILES SMITH (1524-1624), who was on the 12-man final revision committee and also wrote the Preface, was expert in Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Latin, Greek, and Arabic. These were as familiar to him as his own mother tongue. A fellow bishop called him “a very walking library.” He was a graduate of Brasenose College, Oxford, a doctor of divinity, Prebendary\* of Hereford Cathedral, and (from 1612) Bishop of Gloucester. His father had made a fortune as a fletcher or a maker of bows and arrows. He was buried in the cathedral at Gloucester. The tombs of his two daughters that died in childbirth are also in the cathedral. His portrait, which was made in 1612, hangs in Christ Church College, Oxford. [\* A Prebendary “was the holder of a cathedral benefice, and his Prebend usually consisted of revenue from one manor of the cathedral states” Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators*, p. 29.]

ROBERT SPALDING (d. 1626), Fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge, followed Edward Lively as Regius Professor of Hebrew. He was the rector of Slaughtam.

JOHN SPENCER (1559-1614) was elected Greek lecturer at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, when he was only 19 years old. He was a chaplain to King James and in 1607 was made President of Corpus Christi upon the death of John Reynolds. His wife “was a great-niece of Thomas Cranmer, that Archbishop of Canterbury, whom Queen Mary burnt at the stake for his Protestantism” (McClure, *Translators Revived*). He wrote the foreword to Richard Hooker’s famous work, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. There is a statue of Spencer at Corpus Christi College, depicting the translator holding an open book.

SAMUEL WARD (1572?-1643) was Master of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, from 1609 until his death; he was also Lady Margaret\* Professor of Divinity. Among Ward’s pupils at Sidney Sussex were Oliver Cromwell and the future historian Thomas Fuller. In 1618 Ward was selected by King James to attend the Synod of Dort, in Holland, as one of “the four divines most able and meet to represent the Church of England, at the famous Council.” Ward’s puritanical piety is displayed in his diary, which is extant. As a student he bewailed his lack of godliness: “Pride, Desire of vainglory, yea, in little things. Wearisomeness in God’s service. Non affection. No delite in God’s service. No care of exhorting my brethren. No boldness in the confessing of God’s name. No delite in hearing God’s word, or in prayer, or in receiving of the Sacraments. Shame in serving God” (Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, p. 126). Ward was past 50 when he married a widow, who had a daughter (Opfell, p. 70). He was imprisoned briefly in 1642 for supporting King Charles I during the Civil War and died six weeks later from an illness contracted during confinement. Ward was the first person buried in the chapel of Sidney Sussex College. [\* Lady

Margaret Beaufort, “mother of Henry VII, was the founder of St. John’s and Christ’s Colleges,” Opfell, p. 70.]

e. Consider some further testimonies to the capability of the KJV translators:

John Selden, in *Table-talk* (1689), said: “The English translation of the Bible is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best.”

Thomas Hartwell Horne (1818), in *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, said: “We cannot but call to mind with gratitude and admiration, the integrity, wisdom, fidelity, and learning of the venerable translators, of whose pious labors we are now-reaping, the benefit; who, while their reverence for the Holy Scriptures induced them to be as literal as they could, to avoid obscurity have been extremely happy in the simplicity and dignity of their expressions; and who, by their adherence to the Hebrew idiom, have at once enriched and adorned our language.”

William T. Brantly, a leader in the Baptist denomination in America, said (1837): “... the forty seven professors and divines, who were appointed by James I., to re-translate, revise and correct preceding versions ... were profound philologists, men of ripe scholarship, and well skilled in critical acumen. ... it is difficult to imagine, how any individual, professedly acquainted with the literature of the reigns of Elizabeth and James, could be purblind to the fact, that so far from the Hebrew and Oriental languages falling into neglect and disuse during those periods, *au contraire*, they were among the first and prominent studies at Oxford and Cambridge; and that men, profoundly skilled in both, composed the conference who sat in solemn and nature deliberation at Hampton Court. ... we believe it will be difficult for the most incredulous mind to evade the conviction, that the venerable translators were eminently qualified, both by their learning and their piety, to produce an accurate and faithful version of the Bible in the English language...” (*Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1837, pp. 42-45).

Alexander McClure, author of *Translators Revived*, 1855: “As to the capability of those men, we may say again that by the good Providence of God, their work was undertaken in a fortunate time. Not only had the English language, that singular compound, then ripened to its full perfection, but the study of Greek, and of the oriental tongues ... had then been carried to a greater extent in England than ever before or since. ... it is confidently expected that the reader of these pages will yield to the conviction, that all the colleges of Great Britain and America, even in this proud day of boastings, could not bring together the same number of divines equally qualified by learning and piety for the great undertaking. Few indeed are the living names worthy to be enrolled with these



mighty men. It would be impossible to convent out of any one Christian denomination, or out of all, a body of translators, on whom the whole Christian community would bestow such confidence as is reposed upon that illustrious company, or who would prove themselves as deserving of such confidence.”

Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Episcopalian bishop in western New York, exalted the skills of the King James translators in his “Apology for the Common English Bible” of 1857. He called them “those giants of Scriptural scholarship” and the “great scholars of the old time, whose reputation and labours have received the homage of men of learning for more than two centuries complete.” After describing some of the individual translators, Coxe concluded: “A biographical history of all who had part in the Translation, is a desideratum, and might be an effectual antidote to the itch for superseding their work, which seems to trouble so many in our days” (Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible*, pp, 21, 22). (A “disideratum” is “that which is not possessed, but which is desirable; any perfection or improvement which is wanted,” Webster 1828).

Dean John Burgon (1883), one of the greatest textual scholars of the 19th century: “... the plain fact being that the men of 1611 produced a work of real genius: seizing with generous warmth the meaning and intention of the sacred Writers. ... Verily, those men understood their craft! ‘There were giants in those days.’ ... the Spirit of their God was mightily upon them” (*The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 167, 196).

Edward F. Hills (1956, 1979), who had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard: “Judged even by modern standards, their knowledge of the biblical languages was second to none” (*The King James Version Defended*, p. 114).

David Otis Fuller (1986), Princeton-educated Pastor of Wealthy Street Baptist Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan: “God Himself, I believe, was in the choosing of those great scholars of 1611. NEVER in all world history has any such a group of learned and tremendous geniuses ever gathered together. The Chairman of the 1611 committee, Lancelot Andrews, was fluent in 20 languages and spent 5 hours a day in prayer” (D.O. Fuller in a letter to David Cloud, February 7, 1986).

3. The translators had the noble and godly objective of opening the eternal Word of God to English-speaking readers:

“Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks

of Laban were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacobs well (which was deep) without a bucket or some thing to draw with: or as that person mentioned by Isaiah, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with the motion: ‘Read this, I pray thee,’ he was fain to answer, ‘I cannot, for it is sealed’” (“Translators to the Reader”).

4. The translators knew that the great wisdom necessary to produce an accurate Bible translation can only come from God.

“To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men’s eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise . . . And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of wit, or deepness of judgment, as it were an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in him that hath the key of David, opening, and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord, the Father of our Lord, to the effect that St. Augustine did, O let thy Scriptures be my pure delight; let me not be deceived in them, neither let me deceive by them. In this confidence and with this devotion, did they assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them” (“Translators to the Reader”).

5. They understood that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. To my knowledge, a loftier testimony of the Bible’s divine inspiration has never been written than that which is contained in the Preface to the 1611 King James Bible.

“It is not only an armour, but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive, and defensive; whereby we may save our selves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of Manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal’s meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a Panary of wholesome food, against fenowed [moldy] traditions; a Physicians-shop (Saint Basil calleth it) of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a Pandect\* of profitable laws, against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels, against beggarly rudiments; Finally a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the enditer [composer], the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Pen-men such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God’s spirit; the matter, verity, piety, purity, uprightness; the form, God’s word, God’s testimony, God’s oracles, the word of truth, the word of salvation, etc.; the effects, light of understanding, stableness of persuasion, repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy in the holy Ghost; lastly, the end and reward of the study thereof, fellowship with the Saints, participation of the heavenly nature, fruition of an

inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never shall fade away; Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night” (“Translators to the Reader”). [\* A *pandect* is a treatise which contains the whole of any science.]

6. The translators were not paid for their work.

- a. A few of the translators were awarded with ecclesiastical positions that provided them with an income.
- b. Except for one case in which a KJV translator (John Harmer) was paid 50 pounds, only the 12 men who did the final revision received any direct financial payment and their wage was a weekly stipend of 30 shillings for basic expenses as they met in London for the nine months required to complete that portion of the work. This was paid by the king’s printer Robert Barker.
- c. The final revision committee met at Stationers Hall. “The Stationers’ charter established a monopoly on book production ensured that once a member had asserted ownership of a text (or ‘copy’) no other member would publish it. This is the origin of the term ‘copyright’. Members asserted such ownership by entering it in the ‘entry book of copies’ or the Stationers’ Company Register. In 1695 this monopoly was diminished and in 1710 Parliament passed the first copyright act. In 1606 the Company bought Abergavenny House in Ave Maria Lane and moved out of Peters College. The new hall burnt down in the Great Fire of 1666 along with books to the value of about £40,000. It was rebuilt; its present interior is much as it was when it reopened in 1673. The Court Room was added in 1748 and in 1800 the external façade was remodelled to its present form” (*Wikipedia.com*).

7. King James had nothing to do with the translation itself.

## **The Printing**

1. The King James Bible was published in 1611. It was printed by Robert Barker in a large volume bearing on its title page the following inscription: “The Holy Bible, containing the Old Testament & the New: Newly Translated out of the Original tongues; & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesties special Commandment.” Robert Barker’s father Christopher had obtained an exclusive patent as the Royal Printer in 1577. This was transferred to Robert in 1589. Thus when James I ascended the throne, Robert Barker held this position. He started printing Geneva Bibles in 1600 and printed the first Bishops Bible that same year.

2. There were seven printings of the first edition. The Gene Scott collection claims to be the only

collection that has all seven -- <http://www.drgenescott.org/stn27.htm>. This collection is located in The Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, California.

3. There were many mistakes in the first printings. The most infamous is the omission of “not” from the seventh commandment in Exodus 20:14. Copies containing this error were called “the wicked Bible.” (The printer was fined the massive sum of two or three thousand pounds by the King. See Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, p. 25.)

4. The King James Bible master “remained the King’s Printer’s hands at least until 1660 and is believed to have burned in the Great Fire of London in 1666” (<http://www.drgenescott.org/stn27.htm>). It is not possible to reconstruct the master today except by consulting the 1611 editions.

5. The story of the printing of Bibles in England under royal patent during the first 50 years after the King James is, sadly, one of greed and malice.

- a. Soon after the first printing of the King James Bible, Robert Barker went bankrupt.
- b. In 1615, Bonham Norton and John Bill became co-partners in the patent of Barker and his son Christopher, and three years later Robert Barker sued Norton and Bill, claiming that they had cheated him out of thousands of British pounds.
- c. In 1620 Norton ejected Barker from the office and they again sued one another. “The fight between them raged furiously for the next ten years, to the great profit of the lawyers” (Daniell, p. 454).
- d. Robert Barker spent the last ten years of his life in debtor’s prison (King’s Bench Prison) and died there in 1643. The Barker patent expired in 1709, and Barker’s name disappears from the record.

6. Since 1709 the royal patent has been held by the following:

- a. John Baskett and his partners held the patent until 1769.
- b. George Eyre bought the patent in 1769, “which came down to the twentieth-century firm of Eyre & Spottiswoode, which still most acceptably prints Bibles and prayer books, in Andover in Hampshire, UK” (Daniell. p. 513).

## **The Nature of the Translation**

1. The King James Bible is a masterpiece of Bible translation. It conforms to the Hebrew and Greek. Its English language is peerless. It has been called “The Miracle of English Prose.”

- a. I have about 100 books in my library that extol the excellence of the King James Bible. The following statements could be greatly multiplied.

In his book *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation* (Wheaton: Crossway Book, 2002), Dr. Leland Ryken, professor of English at Wheaton College, continually applauds the KJV, praising its beauty, dignity, and power. He uses it as an example of what good Bible translation is all about. He calls for modern translation work to be done after “the King James tradition” (p. 282, 284). The book contains many quotations exalting the KJV.

“peerless literary masterpiece” (p. 270)

“unquestionably the most beautiful book in the world” (p. 267)

“the noblest monument of English prose” (p. 258)

“incomparably the best English translation in its rhythm” (p. 259)

“when it comes to stylistic range and flexibility, the King James Bible is peerless” (p. 227)

“the touchstone of affective power” (p. 206)

“matchless in its literary qualities among all English translations” (p. 188)

“the supremely literary English translation” (p. 163)

“immeasurably superior” (p. 163)

“the touchstone of literary excellence” (p. 62)

“stylistically the greatest English Bible translation ever produced” (p. 51)

Even Roman Catholics have given grudging praise to the King James Bible, recognizing that it has been the bulwark of Protestantism in the English-speaking world.

Alexander Geddes, even when calling for a new translation, gave the following praise to the King James Bible in 1786: “The means and the method employed to produce this translation promised something extremely satisfactory; and great expectations were formed from the united abilities of so many learned men ... and indeed, IF ACCURACY, FIDELITY, AND THE STRICTEST ATTENTION TO THE LETTER OF THE TEXT, BE SUPPOSED TO CONSTITUTE THE QUALITIES OF AN EXCELLENT VERSION, THIS OF ALL VERSIONS, MUST, IN GENERAL, BE ACCOUNTED THE MOST EXCELLENT. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, every letter and point, seem to have been weighed with the nicest exactitude; and expressed, either in the text, or margin, with the greatest precision. Pagninus himself is hardly more literal; and it was well remarked by Robertson, above a hundred years ago, that IT MAY SERVE AS A LEXICON OF THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, AS WELL AS FOR A TRANSLATION” (Geddes, *Prospectus of a New Translation of the Holy*

*Bible*; cited from William Brantly, *Objections to a Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1837, pp. 47, 48).

Frederick William Faber, who went over to the Catholic Church from the Church of England during the Oxford Movement, used these words: “Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert scarcely knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. ... It is his sacred thing, which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible” (Faber, quoted from John Eadie, *The English Bible*, II, p. 158). These words were not only true; they were prophetic. Since the pulling down of the King James Bible and its replacement among Protestant churches in general with the multiplicity of conflicting modern versions, the Rome-oriented ecumenical movement has made amazing progress.

Matthew Poole, 1669: “In the English version published in 1611, occur many specimens of an edition truly gigantic, of uncommon skill in the original tongues, or extraordinary critical acuteness and discrimination, which have been of great use to me very frequently in the most difficult texts” (Poole, *Synopsis Criticorum*; cited from James Lister, *The Excellence of the Authorized Version of the Sacred Scriptures Defended against the Socinians*, 1820, p. 17).

Edward Pocock, Commentary on Micah, 1685: “That translation from our own which we follow is such and so speakable to the original, as that we might well choose among others to follow it, were it not our own, and established by authority among us.”

Jonathan Swift, 1712: “The translators of our Bible were masters of an English style much fitter for that work than any which we see in our present writings, which I take to be owing to the simplicity that runs through the whole” (Jonathan Swift, *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue*, London, 1712).

Adam Clarke, 1810: “Those who have compared most of the European translations with the original, have not scrupled to say, that the English translation of the Bible made under the direction of king James I, is the most accurate and faithful of the whole. Nor is this its only praise; THE TRANSLATORS HAVE SEIZED THE VERY SPIRIT AND SOUL OF THE ORIGINAL AND EXPRESSED THIS ALMOST EVERYWHERE WITH PATHOS AND ENERGY. The

original, from which it was taken, is alone superior to the Bible which was translated by the authority of king James. ... Besides, our translators have not only made a standard translation, but they have made their translation the standard of our language. ... This is an opinion in which my heart, my judgment, and my conscience coincide” (Adam Clarke, General Introduction to his *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1810-26).

William Orme, 1824: “Like every thing human, it is no doubt imperfect; but as a translation of the Bible, it has few rivals, and AS A WHOLE, NO SUPERIOR. It is in general faithful, simple, and perspicuous. IT HAS SEIZED THE SPIRIT AND COPIED THE MANNER OF THE DIVINE ORIGINALS. It seldom descends to meanness or vulgarity; but often rises to elegance and sublimity. It is level to the understanding of the cottager, and fit to meet the eye of the critic, the poet, and the philosopher. It has been the companion of our princes and our nobility, and prized by many of them as their most invaluable treasure. It is the birthright of our numerous population, and has proved the means of knowledge, holiness and joy to millions; and WE TRUST IT IS DESTINED FOR AGES YET TO COME, to be the glory of the rich, and the inheritance of the poor; the guide to the way-worn pilgrim, and the messenger of peace to many a dying sinner” (William Orme, *Bibliotheca Biblica: a Select List of Books on Sacred Literature, with Notices Biographical, Critical, and Bibliographical*, 1824).

Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, 1841: “The style of our present version is incomparably superior to any thing which might be expected from the finical and perverted taste of our own age. It is simple, it is harmonious, it is energetic; and, which is of no small importance, use has made it familiar, and time has rendered it sacred” (Middleton, first Anglican bishop of Calcutta, *The Doctrine of the Greek article Applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament*, 1841).

John Dowling, Baptist leader in America and author of *History of Romanism*, 1850: “The fact is that the common version which it is proposed to amend, is, taken as a whole, a wonderful translation, and although it may be conceded that it is not perfect--for what human performance is so?--yet it is exceedingly doubtful, whether a translation has ever been made from any ancient book, Greek, Latin, or Oriental--which in point of faithfulness to its original can be compared with this, or which has fewer errors in proportion to the entire amount of its contents. ... to attempt to supplant it by a ‘new version,’ or to introduce any material alterations, would be like ‘gilding refined gold’...” (*The Old-Fashioned Bible, or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament*, 1850, pp. 11, 12, 13).

Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Episcopalian bishop in western New York, 1857: “The Holy Scriptures, as translated in the reign of king James the First, are the noblest heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race. ... It was the work, in some degree, of all, who, in the successive stages of England’s growth and development, had contributed to that great principle of the Anglican Reformation ... It was the Bible of Adhelm and Bede and Aelfric and of Alfred; of Stephen Langton and Rolle of Hampole; of Wiclif and Tindal and Coverdale and Cranmer and Parker, and of all the noble army of Marian Martyrs. Finally, it was the Bible which had been winnowed from whatever was unsubstantial in the fruits of all their labours, and which combined the merits of all; IT WAS THE FINEST OF THE WHEAT. ... The English language was in its prime and purity; its wells were undefiled. ... By the acclamation of the universe, it is the most faultless version of the Scriptures that ever existed in any tongue. To complain of its trifling blemishes, is to complain of the sun for its spots. ... ” (Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible*, 1857, pp. 5, 6, 8).

Joseph Philpot, 1861: “They [the KJV translators] were deeply penetrated with a reverence for the word of God, and, therefore, they felt themselves bound by a holy constraint to discharge their trust in the most faithful way. UNDER THIS DIVINE CONSTRAINT THEY WERE LED TO GIVE US A TRANSLATION UNEQUALLED FOR FAITHFULNESS TO THE ORIGINAL, AND YET AT THE SAME TIME CLOTHED IN THE PUREST AND SIMPLEST ENGLISH. ... No one can read, with an enlightened eye, the discourses of our Lord without seeing what a divine simplicity ran through all His words; and our translators were favoured with heavenly wisdom to translate these words of the Lord into language as simple as that in which they first fell from His lips. What can exceed the simplicity and yet beauty and blessedness of such declarations as these?--‘I am the bread of life;’ ‘I am the door;’ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life:’ ‘I lay down My life for the sheep;’ ‘I am the vine;’ ‘God is love;’ ‘By grace ye are saved.’ Even where the words are not strictly monosyllabic they are of the simplest kind, and as such are adapted to the capacity of every child of God, in whatever rank of life he may be. The blessedness of having not only such a Bible, but possessing such a translation of it can never be sufficiently valued. ... it is because the language of our Bible is such pure, simple, unaffected, idiomatic, intelligible English that it has become so thoroughly English a book, and has interwoven itself with our very laws and language” (Joseph Philpot, *Gospel Standard*, February 1861). [COMMENT: As we have seen, the purity and simplicity of the language of the KJV regularly goes back to William Tyndale, and some times even to Wycliffe.]

Frederick Scrivener, 1884: “Nor can the attentive student of the Authorized version fail to marvel at the perfect and easy command over the English language exhibited by its authors on every page. The fulness and variety of their diction,



the raciness of their idiomatic resources, seem almost to defy imitation, while they claim our just and cheerful admiration” (*The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, p. 141).

William Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911: “The influence of the Authorised Version, alike on our religion and our literature, can never be exaggerated. ... The Authorized Version has often been called A WELL OF ENGLISH UNDEFILED, and much of its purity is due to the fact that its water was drawn from the ancient springs. It has the universal note which gives it a place among the immortals. IT HAS THE DIVINE TOUCH, EVEN IN ITS DICTION, WHICH LIFTS IT ABOVE THE LIMITATIONS OF LOCALITY AND TIME, AND MAKES IT VALID AND LIVING FOR ALL THE AGES. Like A RARE JEWEL FITLY SET, the sacred truths of Scripture have found such suitable expression in it, that we can hardly doubt that they filled those who made it with reverence and awe, so that they walked softly in the Holy Presence. ... THE ENGLISH BIBLE IS STILL FRESH AND MIGHTY, EVEN IF IT HAS ARCHAIC OR OBSOLETE WORDS. IT HAS WAXED OLD, BUT IT HAS NOT DECAYED. ITS YOUTH ABIDES, AND THE SUN NEVER SETS ON ITS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE. Many volumes have perished since it first saw the light; but its message is as modern as ever. It has not only kept up-to-date, it has anticipated every need of men, and still responds to every new demand” (Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, 1911, pp. 131, 192, 238).

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, critic, scholar, and educational reformer, 1913: “I grant you, to be sure, that the path to the Authorised Version was made straight by previous translators, notably by William Tyndale. I grant you that Tyndale was a man of genius, and Wyclif before him a man of genius. I grant you that the forty-seven men who produced the Authorised Version worked in the main upon Tyndale’s version, taking that for their basis. Nay, if you choose to say that Tyndale was a miracle in himself, I cheerfully grant you that as well. ... and when Tyndale has been granted you have yet to face the miracle that forty-seven men--not one of them known, outside of this performance, for any superlative talent--sat in committee and almost consistently, over a vast extent of work--improved upon what Genius had done. I give you the word of an old committee-man that this is not the way of committees--that only by miracle is it the way of any committee. ... Individual genius such as Tyndale’s or even Shakespeare’s, though we cannot explain it, we may admit as occurring somehow, and not incredibly, in the course of nature. But THAT A LARGE COMMITTEE OF FORTY-SEVEN SHOULD HAVE GONE STEADILY THROUGH THE GREAT MASS OF HOLY WRIT, SELDOM INTERFERING WITH GENIUS, YET, WHEN INTERFERING, SELDOM MISSING TO IMPROVE: THAT A COMMITTEE OF FORTY-SEVEN SHOULD HAVE CAPTURED (OR EVEN, LET US SAY, SHOULD HAVE RETAINED AND IMPROVED) A

RHYTHM SO PERSONAL, SO CONSTANT, THAT OUR BIBLE HAS THE VOICE OF ONE AUTHOR SPEAKING THROUGH ITS MANY MOUTHS: THAT, GENTLEMEN, IS A WONDER BEFORE WHICH I CAN ONLY STAND HUMBLE AND AGHAST. Does it or does it not strike you as queer that the people who set you ‘courses of study’ in English Literature never include the Authorised Version, which not only intrinsically but historically is out and away the greatest book of English Prose. ... the Authorised Version astounds me, as I believe it will astound you when you compare it with earlier translations. Aristotle (it has been said) invented Chance to cover the astonishing fact that there were certain phenomena for which he found himself wholly unable to account. Just so, if one may compare very small things with very great, I spoke of the Authorised Version as a ‘miracle.’ It was, it remains, marvellous to me. ... were this University to limit me to three texts on which to preach English Literature to you, I should choose the Bible in our Authorised Version, Shakespeare, and Homer (though it were but in a prose translation)” (*On the Art of Writing, Lectures delivered before the University of Cambridge, 1913-14*).

John Livingston Lowes (1867-1945), American scholar of English literature, 1936, called the King James Bible “THE NOBLEST MONUMENT OF ENGLISH PROSE.” This was the title of the chapter that he contributed to *Essays in Appreciation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1936).

Arthur Clutton-Brock, essayist, critic, and journalist, 1938, said: “The Authorized Version of the Bible is a piece of literature without any parallel in modern times. Other countries of course, have their translations of the Bible, but they are not great works of art” (Vernon Storr, editor, *The English Bible: Essays by Various Writers*, Clutton-Brock, “The English Bible,” 1938).

H. Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, 1940: “The Authorized Version is a miracle and a landmark. Its felicities are manifold, its music has entered into the very blood and marrow of English thought and speech, it has given countless proverbs and proverbial phrases even to the unlearned and the irreligious. There is no corner of English life, no conversation ribald or reverent it has not adorned. Embedded in its tercentenary wording is the language of a century earlier. IT HAS BOTH BROADENED AND RETARDED THE STREAM OF ENGLISH SPEECH” (Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, p. 205).

Henry Louis Mencken (1880-1956), “the most prominent newspaperman, book reviewer, and political commentator of his day,” said this about the King James Bible: “It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, IT IS PROBABLY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF WRITING IN ALL THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD. ... Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure,

eloquent, lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry, at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of” (Gustavas Paine, Preface, *The Learned Men*).

Winston Churchill, 1956: “The scholars who produced this masterpiece are mostly unknown and unremembered. But they forged an enduring link, literary and religious, between the English-speaking people of the world” (*History of the English-Speaking People*, “The New World”).

Gustavus Paine, author of *The Men Behind the KJV*, 1977, wrote: “... not only was theirs the best of the English Bibles; there is, in no modern language, a Bible worthy to be compared with it as literature. ... indeed the 1611 rhythms have been potent to affect writing, speaking, and thinking ever since the learned men produced them. ... They knew how to make the Bible scare the wits out of you and then calm you, all in English as superb as the Hebrew and the Greek” (pp. 169, 171, 172).

When Harvard University Press published *The Literary Guide to the Bible* in 1987, they selected the KJV for the literary analysis of each of the Bible books. “... our reasons for doing so must be obvious: it is the version most English readers associate with the literary qualities of the Bible, and IT IS STILL ARGUABLY THE VERSION THAT BEST PRESERVES THE LITERARY EFFECTS OF THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES” (*The Literary Guide to the Bible*, p. 7).

Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post*: “King James Bible is THE GREATEST WORK EVER WRITTEN IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, PERIOD” (quoted in Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, in the section “Praise for God’s Secretaries” which follows the table of contents).

David Daniell, 2003: “On a historical scale, the sheer longevity of this version is a phenomenon, without parallel. ... IN THE STORY OF THE EARTH WE LIVE ON, ITS INFLUENCE CANNOT BE CALCULATED. ITS WORDS HAVE BEEN FOUND TO HAVE A UNIQUE QUALITY, of being able both to lift up a dedicated soul higher than had been thought, and to reach even below the lowest depths of human experience” (David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 427).

Adam Nicholson, 2003: “The marvels of this passage [Psalm 8:3-5] consist above all in one quality, or at least in one combination of qualities: AN ABSOLUTE SIMPLICITY OF VOCABULARY SET IN A RHYTHM OF THE UTMOST STATELINESS AND MAJESTY. The words are necessarily slowed to a muffled drumbeat of a pace. There is no hurrying this, no running away with it, as a Shakespeare speech can sometimes hurry, a rushed cataract of words

tripping over itself even as it emerges. The characteristic sound of the King James Bible is not like that but, like the ideal of majesty itself, is indescribably vast and yet perfectly accessible, reaching up to the sublime and down to the immediate and the concrete, without any apparent effort. The rhetoric of this translation has, in fact, precisely the qualities which this psalm attributes to God: a majesty that is mindful of man” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, pp. 230, 231).

- b. The style of the King James Bible is not that of the 17th century but is an English style molded by the Hebrew and Greek.

- (1) “... the English of the King James Version is not the English of the early 17th century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. IT IS BIBLICAL ENGLISH, which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version. As H. Wheeler Robinson (1940) pointed out, one need only compare the preface written by the translators with the text of their translation to feel the difference in style. And the observations of W.A. Irwin (1952) are to the same purport. The King James Version, he reminds us, owes its merit, not to 17th-century English--which was very different--but to its faithful translation of the original. ITS STYLE IS THAT OF THE HEBREW AND OF THE NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. Even in their use of *thee* and *thou* the translators were not following 17th-century English usage but biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural *you* in polite conversation” (Edward Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 218).
- (2) “Hallam ... [declares] that the English of the Jacobean version [the King James Bible] ‘is not the English of Daniel, or Raleigh, or Bacon’--in fact, that ‘it is not the language of the reign of James I.’ ... this is strictly true, and for the reason that he assigns, namely, ‘in consequence of the principle of adherence to the original versions which had been kept up since the time of Henry VIII’” (Albert Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, 1910).
- (3) “This English is there to serve the original not to replace it. It speaks in its master’s voice, and is not the English you would have heard on the street, then or ever. It took up its life in a new and distinct dimension of linguistic space, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND GREEK (OR, FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT, BETWEEN ENGLISH AND HEBREW). These scholars were not pulling the language of the scriptures into the English they knew and used at home. The words of the King James Bible are just as much English pushed towards the condition of a foreign language as a foreign language translated into English. It was, in other words, more important to make English godly than to make the words of God into the sort of prose that any Englishmen would have

written, and that secretarial relationship to the original languages of the scriptures shaped the translation” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, pp. 210, 211).

- (4) Professor Gerald Hammond of the University of Manchester, England, said the KJV translators “have taken care to reproduce the syntactic details of the originals,” and, “At its best, which means often, the Authorized Version has the kind of transparency which makes it possible for the reader to see the original clearly. It lacks the narrow interpretative bias of modern versions, and is the stronger for it” (Gerald Hammond, “English Translations of the Bible,” *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, eds. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 664, 656).
  - (5) The reason for this was the translators’ conviction that the Hebrew and Greek words of the Scripture are the eternal words of God. In “The Translators to the Reader,” Miles Smith spoke for them all when he said of the Bible: “It is ... a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the enditer [composer], the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Pen-men such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God’s spirit...”
- c. The King James Bible has a proper “biblical” style that is understandable but exalted and reverent, having the proper “rhythm” and “tone.” We have already seen that “majesty” was one of the objectives of the KJV translators.
- (1) “The Bible is not a modern, human book. It is not as new as the morning newspaper, and no translation should suggest this. If the Bible were this new, it would not be the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible is an ancient, divine Book, which nevertheless is always new because in it God reveals Himself. Hence THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE SHOULD BE VENERABLE AS WELL AS INTELLIGIBLE, and the King James Version fulfills these two requirements better than any other Bible in English” (Edward F. Hills, p. 219).
  - (2) “I believe that it is correct for an English translation to preserve AN APPROPRIATE ARCHAIC FLAVOR as a way of preserving the distance between us and the biblical world. Joseph Wood Krutch used an evocative formula in connection with the King James Bible when he spoke of ‘an appropriate flavor of a past time’” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).
  - (3) “GOOD RHYTHM FOR A BIBLE IS LIKE A QUALIFYING EXAM: If a translation cannot measure up on this matter, it is not in the running to be a

superior Bible for public use and oral reading in more private situations. ... The best test of rhythm is simply to read passages aloud. ... If in oral reading a passage ebbs and flows smoothly, avoids abrupt stops between words and phrases where possible, and provides a sense of continuity, it is rhythmically excellent. If a translation clutters the flow of language and is consistently staccato in effect, it is rhythmically inferior. ... All of these considerations make rhythm an essential translation issue, not a peripheral one. For a book that is read aloud as often as the Bible is, and for a book whose utterances are so frequently charged with strong feeling and sublime ideas, excellent rhythm should be regarded as a given” (Ryken, pp. 257, 259).

- (4) “Tone is the literary term that refers to such things as the writer’s attitude toward his or her subject matter, the suitability of style for the content, and the correctness of effect on a reader. ... From time to time I encounter the sentiment from dynamic equivalency advocates that the Bible ‘should not sound like the Bible.’ Billy Graham endorsed *The Living Letters* by saying that ‘it is thrilling to read the Word ... [in] a style that reads much like today’s newspaper.’ I disagree with these verdicts. A SACRED BOOK SHOULD SOUND LIKE A SACRED BOOK, NOT LIKE THE DAILY NEWSPAPER. It should command attention and respect, and to do so it cannot be expressed in the idiom of the truck stop. The failure of modern colloquial translations is frequently a failure of tone.” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 278, 279, 280)
- (5) “To make the Bible readable in the modern sense means to flatten out, tone down and convert into tepid expository prose what in K.J.V. is wild, full of awe, poetic, and passionate. It means stepping down the voltage of K.J.V. so it won’t blow any fuses” (Dwight Macdonald, “The Bible in Modern Undress,” in *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*, ed. D.G. Kehl, 1970, p. 40).
- (6) “We are in real danger of losing, in an age of flat prose, an essential and invaluable capacity of the language, fully realized once in the English Bible ... the capacity to express by tone and overtone, by rhythm, and by beauty and force of vocabulary, the religious, the spiritual, the ethical cravings of man” (Henry Canby, “A Sermon on Style,” in *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*, ed. D.G. Kehl, 1970, p. 427).

2. The King James Version of 1611 was intended to be a study Bible. It contained 8,422 marginal notes. Of these, 4,111 gave a more literal meaning of the Hebrew and Greek, 2,156 gave alternative translations, and 67 gave variant readings. In the New Testament there are 37 variant readings in the marginal notes. “As the marginal notes indicate, the King James translators did not regard their work as perfect or inspired, but they did consider it to be a trustworthy reproduction of God’s holy Word, and as such they commended it to their Christian readers” (Edward Hills, p. 216).

3. The King James Bible gained general ascendancy over the popular Geneva Bible within a couple of decades. It was natural that the Geneva Bible would retain its popularity for some time. It had been THE English Bible for 50 years and had become an intimate part of the private lives, ministry, and public thinking of the English people.

- a. By the 1630s, though, the Geneva Bible ceased to be imported from Holland.
- b. During the transitional period many quoted both from Geneva and the King James. This was true of the poet John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*; John Bunyan, Baptist preacher and author of *Pilgrim's Progress*; and Oliver Cromwell who led the government from the beheading of Charles I to the coronation of Charles II.
- c. Some have taken the position that the King James Bible won over its successors strictly because of commercial monopolies or because it was promoted by the ecclesiastical authorities in England. Some look upon its triumph as a mere accident of history. These theories do not explain the following:
  - (1) These theories do not explain why the Geneva Bible stopped being printed not only in England, but everywhere else as well. Regardless of how exclusive was their right to print Bibles in England, Robert Barker and Cambridge University could not stop the importation of Geneva Bibles from Europe; and had there been a market we can be certain that the European presses would have taken advantage of it and would have supplied as many copies of the Geneva Bible as Englishmen wanted to purchase. The printing of the Tyndale Bible was entirely forbidden in England until after Tyndale's death, but this did not stop the people from purchasing copies that were smuggled in from Europe.
  - (2) These theories do not explain why the ecclesiastical authorities of England were never able to succeed in foisting their will upon the people before the time of the King James Bible. Henry VIII's attempt to keep the people from loving the Tyndale Bible had failed. The bishops' attempt to replace the Geneva Bible with the Bishops Bible had failed. The Archbishop of Canterbury even refused to allow the Geneva Bible to be printed in England during his reign in an attempt to discourage its sale, but nothing changed. The people continued to purchase the imported Geneva, because that is the one they wanted. We can be sure that had the British people continued to prefer the Geneva Bible over the King James indefinitely, no amount of badgering from ecclesiastical authorities and no commercial monopoly would have changed their minds.
  - (3) These theories do not explain why the King James Bible remained unchallenged for so long and why it retains a strong hold upon people's affection even to this day. David Daniell, who holds the commercial monopoly theory, admits, "...the

sheer longevity of this version is a phenomenon, without parallel. English translations come and go, some with strong effect: but 'King James' is still the bestselling book in the world." If the King James Bible won over its predecessors only on the weight of commercial interests and not because of its inherent superiority, why did it dominate the field for such an extraordinary length of time, not only in Great Britain, but also in America and Canada and throughout the English-speaking world?

- (4) The real explanation for the triumph of the King James Bible is divine blessing. It triumphed because the people loved it. It triumphed because no competitor in the past 394 years has taken its measure. And unlike modern versions such as the New International and the New Living and the Good News, sales of the King James Bible have not been sustained by massive advertising campaigns or by the promotion of the world's most popular evangelist.

4. The King James Version is still revered by millions of English-speaking people. In spite of the vast advertising campaign that has been waged for 100 years in favor of the modern versions, by the mid-1990s the KJV was still outselling all opponents.

- a. In 1994 the following appeared in the preface to *The King James Bible Word Book*: "Despite the availability of many new translations and paraphrases of God's Word, THE VENERABLE KING JAMES VERSION STILL POSTS MORE SALES EACH YEAR THAN ANY OTHER" (*The King James Bible Word Book*, Publisher's Preface, p. iii).
- b. In 1995, I wrote to Thomas Nelson Publishers to find out what English version had the greatest sales, and they replied that the King James Bible still had the greatest sales in the United States. "In your fax dated March 27th, you mentioned a statistic that the 'NIV version leads the King James Version in sales since 1986.' This perspective is usually based on data reported by Spring Arbor Distributors which footnotes in their report that these figures are based on their distribution only. ALL GENERAL DISTRIBUTORS SELL MORE KJV than NIV. Unfortunately there is no industry-wide report available" (Philip Stoner, Vice President, Biblical and Religious Reference Publishing, Thomas Nelson, April 4, 1995).
- c. A 1995 poll showed that nearly all Americans own at least one version of the Bible and that approximately two-thirds of those surveyed claim the Authorized Version as their main translation (Thomas Holland, *Crowned with Glory*, chapter 5, "The English Jewel," citing information from Jennifer Lowe, "Buy the Book," *Dayton Daily News*, Dayton Ohio, Sept. 16, 1995, p. 7C).



## Tyndale's Influence upon the KJV

1. The King James Version is a revision of the Tyndale Bible. Comparisons have been made, showing, for example, that nine-tenths of the Authorized Version in the First Epistle of John and five-sixths of the Epistle of Ephesians are directly from Tyndale. "These proportions are maintained throughout the entire New Testament" (Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 251).

*Tyndale Bible, Philippians 2:5-13 –*

"Let the same mind be in you the which was in Christ Jesus: which, being in the shape of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Nevertheless he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the shape of a servant, and became like unto men, and was found in his apparel as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath exalted him, and given him a name above all names: that in the name of Jesus should every knee bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under earth, and that all tongues should confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord, unto the praise of God the Father. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not when I was present only, but now much more in mine absence, even so perform your own health with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you, both the will and also the deed, even of good will."

2. Much of the powerful, direct, energetic style of the King James Bible is Tyndale's. British historian James Froude observed: "Of the translation itself (the 1611), though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air" (Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, III, 1893, p. 84).

3. The King James Bible is also a significant improvement over the Tyndale as well as over the Geneva.

"In a cumulative way, all the virtues of the various translations which preceded it were gathered up. **Tyndale** had coined words and phrases like 'peace maker,' 'passover,' 'long-suffering,' 'scapegoat,' 'the Lord's Anointed,' 'flowing with milk and honey,' 'filthy lucre,' 'the salt of the earth,' and 'the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.' **Coverdale**, 'tender mercies,' 'respect of persons,' 'lovingkindness,' 'pride of life,'

‘enter thou into the joy of the Lord,’ ‘the valley of the shadow of death’; the **Geneva Bible**, ‘Vanity of vanities,’ ‘except a man be born again,’ “smite them hip and thigh,” remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,’ ‘Solomon in all his glory,’ ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,’ and other unforgettable turn of phrase. ... From the **Bishops’ Bible** came: ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness,’ ‘less than the least of all the saints,’ ‘Sufficient unto the day, is the evil thereof,’ and ‘Rend your hearts and not your garments.’ And from the **Second Wycliffe** version came ‘gave up the ghost,’ ‘well stricken in age,’ ‘held his peace,’ ‘three score and ten,’ ‘strait is the gate and narrow the way,’ and ‘a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’” (Benson Bobrick, *Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution It Inspired*, 2002, p. 258)

### Consider Genesis 1:1-2

Tyndale: “In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.

Geneva: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.”

KJV: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

The Geneva is an improvement over the Tyndale, and with a few slight modifications the KJV translators improve the Geneva. “These are slight and marvellous changes. Some are almost purely rhythmic. ... The commas after ‘heaven’ and in the second verse are signs to pause in the reading of it, and the colon after ‘deep’ marks a slightly longer rest. In these slightest of ways, Andrewes [the head of the KJV committee that translated the Pentateuch] introduces two new qualities to add to Tyndale’s: an aural fluency and the sense of ease which comes from that; and, allied to that ease, a pace of deliberate and magisterial slowness, no hurry here, pausing in its hugeness, those bass colours in the vocabulary matched by a heavy, soft drumming of the rhythm. It is as solemn and orderly as the beginning of a steady and majestic march” (Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries*, pp. 193, 194).

### Consider Psalm 23:6

Geneva: “Doubtless kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall remain a long season in the house of the Lord.”

KJV: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Consider Psalm 121:1

Geneva: “I will lift mine eyes unto the mountains, from whence my help shall come.”

KJV: “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.”

Consider the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13

Tyndale: “O our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Let thy kingdom come. Thy will be fulfilled, as well in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive our trespassers. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and power, and the glory for ever. Amen.”

KJV: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

Consider Matthew 11:28-30

Tyndale: “Come unto me all ye that labour and are laden and I will ease you. Take my yoke on you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

KJV: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Consider Mark 14:4

Tyndale: “When he was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, even as he sat at meat, there came a woman with an alabaster box of ointment, called narde, that was pure and costly, and she brake the box and poured it on his head. There were some that disdained in themselves, and said: what needed this waste of ointment? For it might have been sold for more than two hundred pence, and been given unto the poor. And they grudged against her.”

KJV: “And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.”

“Tyndale is flat and only half accurate. ‘What needed this waste of ointment?’ is a lumpen sentence compared with ‘Why was this waste of the ointment made?’ Tyndale’s version does not embrace the strange ambiguity of making something by wasting it which the Jacobean sentence conveys with economy, accuracy and its own form of resonant elegance. The King James Version steps beyond the question of liberalism verses gracefulness. It has plumbed and searched for the essence of the meaning and in that way is an exercise in passionate exactness. It doesn’t choose between the clear and the rich but makes its elucidation into a kind of richness. It is a sleight of hand, but this is the central paradox of the translation: the richness of the words somehow represents a substance that goes beyond mere words and that is its triumph” (Nicholson, p. 197).

#### Consider Luke 22:20

Tyndale: “... This is the cup, the new testament, in my blood, which shall for you be shed.”

KJV: “... This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”

By a simple rearrangement of the words, the KJV improves the sound dramatically.

#### Consider John 3:16

Geneva: “For God so loveth the world, that he hath given his only begotten Son: that none that believe in him, should perish, but have everlasting life.”

Tyndale: “For God so loveth the world, that he hath given his only son, that none that believe in him, should perish: but should have everlasting life.”

KJV: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The KJV not only follows the Greek more precisely than its predecessors, it also improves the English in small but perceptible ways.

## The King James Bible's Worldwide Influence

1. It had a powerful influence upon England, producing spiritual reformation and making it into a great missionary-sending nation. We have examined this under the section on the Tyndale Bible.
2. It also had a strong role in the creation of the United States of America, a nation that in former days particularly was a spiritual light to the entire world. America was created as a bastion of religious liberty by those who believed the Bible and were fleeing persecution in England and Europe. The King James Bible had a powerful influence upon America's founding political documents. And it built the hundreds of thousands of churches that once made her great, morally and spiritually.
3. It had a powerful influence upon the English language itself.

The English language is filled with sayings that come directly from the King James Bible. These have become so much a part of the language that most English speakers are not aware that they come from the Bible.

A few examples are "lick the dust," "land of the living," "from strength to strength," "pride goeth before a fall," "the skin of his teeth," "a thorn in the flesh," "the scales fall from your eyes," "salt of the earth," "fight the good fight," "turn the other cheek," "the pride of life," "labour of love," "root of all evil," "a soft answer," "the fat of the land," and "a land of milk and honey."

Consider the following testimony to the literary affect of the King James Bible from Cleland Boyd McAfee's *The Greatest English Classic: A Study of the King James Version of the Bible and Its Influence on Life and Literature* (1912), chapter IV, "The Influence of the King James Version on English Literature" --

"The first and most notable fact regarding the influence of the Bible on English literature is the remarkable extent of that influence. It is literally everywhere. If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.

"The literary effect of the King James version at first was less than its social effect; but in that very fact lies a striking literary influence. For a long time it formed virtually the whole literature which was readily accessible to ordinary Englishmen. We get our phrases from a thousand books. The common talk of an intelligent man shows the effect of many authors upon his thinking. Our fathers got their phrases from one great book. Their writing and their speaking show the effect of that book. ...

"First, the style of the King James version has influenced English literature markedly.

Professor Gardiner opens one of his essays with the dictum that 'in all study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without question, it is that the ultimate standard of English prose style is set by the King James version of the Bible' (*Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1900, p. 684). You almost measure the strength of writing by its agreement with the predominant traits of this version. ...

"The second element which English literature finds in the Bible is its language. The words of the Bible are the familiar ones of the English tongue, and have been kept familiar by the use of the Bible. The result is that 'the path of literature lies parallel to that of religion. They are old and dear companions, brethren indeed of one blood; not always agreeing, to be sure; squabbling rather in true brotherly fashion now and then; occasionally falling out very seriously and bitterly; but still interdependent and necessary to each other' (Chapman, *English Literature in Account with Religion*). Years ago a writer remarked that every student of English literature, or of English speech, finds three works or subjects referred to, or quoted from, more frequently than others. These are the Bible, tales of Greek and Roman mythology, and Aesop's Fables. Of these three, certainly the Bible furnishes the largest number of references. There is reason for that. A writer wants an audience. Very few men can claim to be independent of the public for which they write. There is nothing the public will be more apt to understand and appreciate quickly than a passing reference to the English Bible. So it comes about that when Dickens is describing the injustice of the Murdstones to little David Copperfield, he can put the whole matter before us in a parenthesis: "Though there was One once who set a child in the midst of the disciples." Dickens knew that his readers would at once catch the meaning of that reference, and would feel the contrast between the scene he was describing and that simple scene. Take any of the great books of literature and black out the phrases which manifestly come directly from the English Bible, and you would mark them beyond recovery" (McAfee, *The Greatest English Classic*).

4. It had a powerful influence upon the great missionary movement of the 17th to the 20th centuries. The King James Bible was almost the exclusive Bible of English-speaking missionaries for three and a half centuries, in which the Gospel went to the ends of the earth. In many cases, the King James Bible was the basis for translations into other languages.

5. Even in the 21st century, the King James Bible continues to be the Bible of tens of thousands of congregations throughout the world and of thousands of missionaries. It continues to be used as the basis for foreign-language translations. In recent decades fresh translations have been made from the King James Bible into Korean, Nepali, Thai, and other languages.

### **Summary of Why We Believe the King James Bible Is Still the Best English Version**

The following is from "The King James Version of the Bible" by Steven Houck, minister in the Protestant Reformed Church ([http://www.prc.org/pamphlets/pamphlet\\_9.html](http://www.prc.org/pamphlets/pamphlet_9.html)) --

Even though the King James Version has its weaknesses, it is an excellent translation and by far

the best version available today. We must not be taken in by the modern versions and their claims. Our 400-year-old Bible is to be preferred above all others because it is better than them all.

1. It was translated by men who are unsurpassed in their knowledge of Biblical studies.
2. The translators were pious men of God who believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.
3. It is the mature fruit of generations of English translations as well as the careful work of its translators.
4. The King James Version is based upon the Received Text rather than the critical Greek text of modern versions.
5. It is a word-for-word translation which faithfully and accurately reflects the originals.
6. The language is one of reverence and respect which gives honor to the majesty of its Author.
7. Of all the English versions of today, it alone is the Bible of the Reformation.
8. Our spiritual forefathers thought so highly of it that they were willing to suffer and even die for it.
9. It is the version which has been recognized for generations and generations as the Bible God has given to His English-speaking Church.

### **The Admonition of the King James Translators**

In the Preface to the 1611 King James Bible, the translators give their readers the following important challenge: “Ye are brought unto fountains of living water which ye digged not. Do not cast earth into them with the Philistines, neither prefer broken pits before them with the wicked Jews. Others have labored, and you may enter into their labors; O receive not so great things in vain, O despise not so great salvation! Be not like swine to tread under foot so precious things, neither yet like dogs to tear and abuse holy things. ... If light be come into the world, love not darkness more than light; if food, if clothing be offered, go not naked, starve not yourselves. ... It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when he setteth his word before us, to read it; when he stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I, Here we are to do they will, O God.” Amen and amen.

### **Some Final Questions about the King James Bible**

1. Was the King James Bible Authorized? This point has been debated aggressively, because no

record of authorization has survived. (All of the documents from the Privy Council from 1600-1613 were destroyed in the Whitehall fire of 1619.) Whether or not it was actually authorized by a king is not really important, of course, as there can be no doubt that God put His stamp of approval upon it, and that is what matters. But since this is a point that is debated, I will give four reasons why I am confident that it is proper to refer to the King James Bible as authorized.

**ANSWER:**

- a. At the Hampton Court conference in 1604 King James I made a formal decision to approve the new translation for use in all the churches. It was done by royal order and under royal watchcare. It has never been explained to my satisfaction why this in itself does not constitute “authorization.” William Barlow’s report of the Hampton Court conference (Barlow was one of the KJV translators and was present at Hampton Court in 1604), stated that the decision was made by the king not only that a new translation would be made but also that it be “ratified by his Royal authority; and so his whole Church to be bound unto it, and none other” (Barlow, *The Sum and Substance of the Conference*, reprinted in Alfred Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, pp. 46, 47). Barlow’s report was published with the king’s approval.
- b. The crown of England has held the copyright to the King James Bible from the beginning.
- c. The title page to the first edition of the King James Bible stated, “Appointed to be read in Churches.”
- d. In 1616 the king issued a command that only the King James Bible was to be printed in England.

Conclusion: The King James Bible was created by royal order, was printed by authority of the Crown of England, and was appointed to be read in all the churches. I see no reason why this does not constitute formal “authorization.”

2. Was the King James Bible ever copyrighted?

**ANSWER:**

- a. The King James Bible was produced under the direct authority of the British Crown and is owned and “copyrighted” by the crown of England.
- b. The British government still licenses all printings of the text in Great Britain, typically by designating one printer as the authorized publisher and requiring other printers to obtain a sublicense from that one.



- c. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge also possess the right to print editions of the crown copyrighted Bibles.
- d. “Annotated study Bibles escape the monopoly by being labeled as ‘Bible commentaries,’ and can also use the text” (Freedictionary.com).
- e. Effectively, there is no copyright outside of Britain. The KJV has been published without restriction in America, for example, since the revolution in the late 18th century.

### 3. Was King James a homosexual?

#### **ANSWER:**

- a. The accusation that King James I was a homosexual has often been made, but we need to be cautious about accepting it.
  - (1) Actually, since he fathered eight children, he couldn’t have been much of a homosexual! He wrote love letters to his wife and obviously enjoyed her most intimate company. He referred to her as “our dearest bedfellow” (Gustavus Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version*, p. 4). When John Rainolds questioned the phrase in the Anglican marriage service, “with my body I thee worship,” King James replied: “... if you had a good wife yourself, you would think that all the honor and worship you could do to her would be well bestowed” (Ibid.).
  - (2) In a book that the king wrote for his son Henry (entitled *Basilikon Doron*, or *A King’s Gift*), he made the following statements about the importance of sexual purity:
    - “But the principal blessing [is] in your marrying of a godly and virtuous wife ... being flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. ... Marriage is the greatest earthly felicity” (p. 43).
    - “Keep your body clean and unpolluted while you give it to your wife whom to only it belongs for how can you justly crave to be joined with a Virgin if your body be polluted?” (p. 44).
    - “When you are married, keep inviolably your promise made to God in your marriage” (p. 45).
    - “Abstain from the filthy vice of adultery; remember only what solemn promise ye made to God at your marriage” (p. 54).

3) The king wrote plainly against the sin of homosexuality.

“Especially eschew to be effeminate” (*Basilikon Doron*, p. 46).

“There are some horrible crimes that ye are bound in conscience never to forgive: such as witchcraft, willful murder, incest, and sodomy” (p. 48).

(4) The charge of homosexuality was made by the king’s enemies and only after his death. The book *King James I Unjustly Accused* by Stephen A. Coston, Sr., makes the case that the charge was slanderous and untrue (KONIGSWORT Inc., 2528 65th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. 813-892-5351). The charge was first made by Anthony Weldon, who had been expelled from his office by James for political reasons and had sworn that he would have his day of vengeance. Weldon not only hated James, he hated the entire Scottish race. Historian Maurice Lee, Jr., warned, “Historians can and should ignore the venomous caricature of the king’s person and behavior drawn by Anthony Weldon” (*Great Britain’s Solomon: James VI & I in His Three Kingdoms*, 1990, pp. 309-310). See also David Wilson, *King James VI & I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) and Christopher Durston, *James I* (London: Routledge, 1993).

(5) That was an age in which intimate but non-sexual relationships between males was common. While at Cambridge, William Sancroft, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, had such a relationship with his roommate Arthur Bonnest. “They lived together, read together and slept together.” When Bonnest contracted TB and had to leave the school, the two continued to correspond. Bonnest wrote: “Thou art oftener in my thoughts than ever; thou art nearer me than when I embraced them. Thou sayest thou lovest me; good, well repeat it again and again.” Adam Nicholson, who records this from Sancroft’s personal correspondence, observes: “The age was at ease with unbridled but apparently quite unsexual love between men” (*God’s Secretaries*, p. 132).

b. While we do not believe that King James was a homosexual, we do not defend his character very far. He was a profligate, conniving, deceitful man, and he was a persecutor of Baptists and other separatists who refused to submit to the state church. In fact, the last two men burned alive in England for their faith were burned during the reign of James, and many others died in their cruel prison cells for no crime other than following the Bible according to the dictates of their own conscience. It was because of the persecution poured out during James’ reign that the Puritans fled England and sailed for America in 1607 and the Pilgrims followed in 1620.

c. The bottom line is that the character of King James I has no relevance to the King

James Bible itself. Though he set the project in motion and there is evidence that he maintained an interest in keeping it moving along, he had no role in the translation. He did not even finance the project.

4. Were the King James translators universally godly and doctrinally without blame?

**ANSWER:**

a. The answer to this question, of course, is no.

(1) The lives of the King James translators were not universally godly. Some of the men were truly godly and some were less so. One of them, Richard Thomson of the Westminster Old Testament committee, was immoderate in the consumption of alcohol.

(2) When judged from a Baptist perspective, they were certainly not without blame. As Anglicans, they held many doctrinal errors. To a man, they held the error of pedobaptism. Even the Puritans among them held to state churchism.

b. While we don't make light of these errors, it is also true that the writers of the Bible were not blameless in their lives, either. The sweet Psalmist David was an adulterer and murderer. Solomon, the wisest man, displayed the grandest lack of wisdom in marrying 1,000 women and becoming an idolater. Peter boldly denied his Lord and later played the hypocrite. Each and every child of Adam can be thankful that God, in His grace, uses deeply blemished people.

c. In approaching the history of the Bible, we must look more to God than to man. Had man alone (or even largely) been responsible, we would not have an infallibly inspired original text nor would we have a preserved text. It is interesting to wonder why God did not use baptistic churches to make our standard English Bible, but the fact remains that He didn't. Even with William Tyndale, there is no evidence that he was ever scripturally baptized or a member of a baptistic New Testament assembly. These are matters that we have to leave with God.

5. Since the KJV translators were so flawed, how do they differ from the authors of modern textual criticism that you reject?

**ANSWER:**

a. It is the difference between disobeying the Bible and disbelieving the Bible. A true child of God can disobey the Bible but he cannot disbelieve it. Though the KJV translators held many errors and deep imperfections, they did not deny the infallible

nature of the Bible. They upheld it as the perfectly inspired Word of God. The “Translators to the Reader” contains their statement of faith: “The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the enditer [composer], the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Pen-men such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God’s spirit...” King James held the same position, as expressed in a letter to his son, Prince Henry: “The whole Scripture is dictated by God’s Spirit ... to instruct and rule the whole church militant to the end of the world. It is composed of two parts, the Old and the New Testaments. The ground of the former is the Law, which sheweth our sin, and containeth justice: the ground of the other is Christ, who pardoning sin containeth grace.” There was a dramatic change in the times during the 19th century and the Bible’s inspiration began to be denied in ever widening circles, and from its inception modern textual criticism has been deeply infected with this spirit of end-time unbelief. Very few of the recognized names in this field have escaped the taint of rationalism.

- b. It is the difference between a wrong doctrine and a damnable doctrine. A true child of God can hold some wrong doctrines, such as in eschatology or ecclesiology; but he cannot hold damnable doctrines. A damnable doctrine (2 Pet. 3:1) is a one that damns the soul to eternal judgment. These are doctrines particularly pertaining to the Person of Jesus Christ, the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 11:3-4). Another damnable doctrine pertains to the nature of the Scripture. The prophets taught that there is “no light” in those who speak not according to God’s Word (Isa. 8:20); Christ taught that “the Scripture cannot be broken” (Jn. 10:35); and the apostles taught that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). Thus, there is no “wiggle” room here. The doctrine of the infallible inspiration of Scripture is foundational to every aspect of Christian life and belief and those who question it are not Spirit taught.
- c. It is the difference between interpreting the Bible and denying the Bible. While I can disagree with a fellow believer over various interpretations of Scripture and still accept him as a brother in Christ, I cannot accept a person as genuinely saved if he denies such things as the deity of Jesus Christ and the infallible nature of the Bible.

6. Hasn’t the KJV been revised and updated in thousands of places?

**ANSWER:**

- a. There were corrections of printing errors, typographical changes, and spelling updates. These were done by the British publishers of the KJV and can be grouped into two time periods.

- (1) There were updates made between 1613 and 1639 for the purpose of correcting printing errors. The revisers included Samuel Ward and John Bois, two of the original translators. “Some errors of the press having crept into the first edition, and others into later reprints, King Charles the First, in 1638, had another edition printed at Cambridge, which was revised by Dr. Ward and Mr. Bois, two of the original Translators who still survived, assisted by Dr. Thomas Goad, Mr. Mede, and other learned men” (Alexander McClure, *The Translators Revived*, 1855). Cambridge University Press published edited editions in 1629 and 1638.
  - (2) An update was made between 1762-69 to correct any lingering printing errors and to update the spelling, enlarge and standardize the italics, and increase the number of cross references and marginal notes. The revision was begun in 1762 by Dr. F.S. Paris of Cambridge University and completed in 1769 by Dr. Benjamin Blayney of Hertford College, Oxford University. “The edition in folio and quarto, revised and corrected with very great care by Benjamin Blayney, D.D., under the direction of the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, and the Delegates of The Clarendon Press, in 1769” (Alexander McClure, *The Revision Revised*, 1855). The revision was made by collating the then current editions of Oxford and Cambridge with those of 1611 and 1701.
- b. All of the changes were of a minor nature, such as the following:
- (1) Printing errors were corrected. This was almost exclusively the nature of the corrections made in the 28 years following the first printing. Consider some examples:
 

Psalm 69:32 -- “seek good” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “seek God” in 1617

Ecclesiastes 1:5 -- “the place” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “his place” in 1638.

Matthew 6:3 -- “thy right doeth” was a printing error in the 1611 that was corrected to “thy right hand doeth” in 1613.
  - (2) The use of italics was more standardized and its use was expanded, indicating words that are not explicitly in the Hebrew and Greek but are implied and “being so necessary to the sense that the English reader would be perplexed or go wrong without it” (Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition*, p. 62).
  - (3) Spelling and punctuation were updated.

- (a) For example, old English had an “e” after the verb (i.e., feare, blinde, sinne, borne), used an “f” for the “s” except at the end of words (alfo instead of also) and “u” for the “v” (euil instead of evil). Consider how 1 Corinthians 14:9 was written in 1611: “So likewise you, except ye vtter by the tongue words easie to be vnderstood, how shall it be knowen what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the aire.” Or Genesis 1:1-2: “In the beginning God created the Heauen, and the Earth. And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters.”
  - (b) Capitalization was more freely used in 1611, and some words that were capitalized then are printed in lower case in later editions. Examples are Altar, Ark, Court, Hanging, Mercy-seat, Noble, Priest, Sabbath, Statutes, Tabernacle, and Cedar-wood.
  - (c) In some cases, punctuation changes were significant, such as the removal of the comma after “God” in Titus 2:13, which was in the 1611 but was omitted in the 1769 edition.
- (4) A large number of new marginal notes and cross-references were added. Chronological dates were also added. “The chronological dates placed in the margin of our modern Bibles are derived from that of Bishop Lloyd in 1701 ... They are in substance taken from Archbishop Ussher’s *Annales V. et N. Testamenti* (1650-4), and are beyond doubt sufficiently exact to be a real help to the reader, the data on which they are constructed being always assumed as true” (Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, pp. 133-34).
- c. Donald Waite of Bible for Today compared every word of the 1611 KJV with a standard KJV in publication today (the 1917 Scofield which uses an Oxford text). He counted the changes that could be heard. The largest number of changes were spelling (e.g., “blinde” to “blind”), but as these have no real significance he did not count them. Waite found only 1,095 changes\* that affect the sound throughout the entire 791,328 words in the King James Bible. Of these, the vast majority are minor changes of form, such as “towards” changed to “toward,” “burnt” changed to “burned,” “amongst” changed to “among,” “lift up” changed to “lifted up,” and “you” changed to “ye.” Obviously these are not real changes of any translational significance. [\* Waite’s original report stated that he found 421 changes that affect the sound, but he later revised that to 1,095 changes.] DR. WAITE FOUND ONLY 136 SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES (out of 791,328 words) between the original KJV of 1611 and the contemporary Oxford edition. Most of these changes were made within 28 years after the original publication of the KJV and were the simple correction of printer’s errors. Dr. Waite’s study is entitled “KJB of 1611 Compared to the KJB of the 1917 Old Scofield” (BFT1294) and can be obtained from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, <http://www.biblefortoday.org/>.

Following are some of the 136 substantial changes that were made in the 1769 revision, the vast majority of which are the correction of printing errors:

1 Samuel 16:12 -- “requite good” changed to “requite me good”  
Esther 1:8 -- “for the king” changed to “for so the king”  
Isaiah 47:6 -- “the” changed to “thy”  
Isaiah 49:13 -- “God” changed to “Lord”  
Isaiah 57:8 “made a” changed to “made thee a”  
Ezekiel 3:11 -- “the people” changed to “the children of thy people”  
Nahum 3:17 -- “the crowned” changed to “thy crowned”  
Acts 8:32 -- “shearer” changed to “his shearer”  
Acts 16:1 -- “which was a Jew” changed to “which was a Jewess”  
1 Peter 2:5 -- “sacrifice” changed to “sacrifices”  
Jude 25 -- “now and ever” changed to “both now and ever”

Further, there are a few differences between the Oxford and the Cambridge corrected editions that can still be found in current editions of the KJV. Following is one example:

Jeremiah 34:16 -- Cambridge has “whom YE had set at liberty” while Oxford has “whom HE had set at liberty”

- d. The most thorough study ever done on the various editions of the King James Bible was by Frederick Scrivener in the late 19th century. He was the author of the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, which was an “elaborate attempt to publish a trustworthy text of King James’ version.” It first appeared in 1873 and was republished in 1884 accompanied by Scrivener’s valuable Introduction and Appendices as *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884). One of the Appendices is a “List of original readings of the Bible of 1611 examined and arranged” and another is a “List of wrong readings of the Bible of 1611 amended in later editions.” Scrivener also analyzed the KJV’s underlying Greek text and tabulated the number of times that it varied from the Stephens and the Beza editions of the Received Text. A reprint of Scrivener’s important book is available from Bible for Today. It is also available on CD from Sola Scriptura Publishing, 1118 SW Orleans St., Topeka, KS 66604. <http://www.solascripturapublishing.com>, [mlangle1@cox.net](mailto:mlangle1@cox.net).
- e. What is the significance of the changes which have been made to the KJV between 1611 and today?
- (1) We see that the KJV has gone through a strenuous purification process that can give the reader confidence in its accuracy.

- (2) We also see that any idea that the KJV was “given by inspiration” is disproved. If it was “given by inspiration” in 1611 it would not have needed any sort of correction. Those who teach that the KJV is more than an accurate translation, that it is given by inspiration and perfect and inerrant in itself and advanced revelation and such must show us exactly which edition they are referring to.

7. Isn’t it significant that the translators retained ecclesiastical terminology from the Bishops Bible? (e.g., “baptize” instead of “immerse”; “church” instead of “congregation”; “charity” instead of “love”)

**ANSWER:**

- a. It is true that the KJV translators were instructed not to change these terms from the Bishops Bible, but I do not think that this did any harm to the Word of God. None of these are wrong translations, and Bible words must be interpreted first and foremost by their context, and when “church” or “baptize” or “charity” are so interpreted, there is no confusion.

- (1) The term “church,” for example, was an ancient English word by the time that the KJV translators used it, and beyond that it was an ancient word in Anglo-Saxon (*circ*), Scottish (*kirk*), German (*kirche*), and other languages. Many linguists believe it was derived from the Latin “curia,” which in turn was from the Greek “kuriakon,” meaning “the Lord’s house” (*McClintok and Strong Cyclopedia*). Wycliffe used “church,” as did the Geneva translators. Tyndale, on the other hand, used “congregation.” This might be deemed better, but even this is not a complete translation of the Greek word “ecclesia,” meaning “a called out assembly.” The term “church” in the KJV is easily interpreted by the Bible itself. I have never been tempted to become an Anglican because the KJV has the word “church” instead of “congregation.”
- (2) As for “charity,” that was an excellent translation and still carries more of the meaning of the Greek than our modern concept of “love.”
- (3) The term “baptism” is another word that some have criticized in the King James Bible. All of the English versions predating the KJV, including the Geneva, used the word “baptize,” which is simply a transliteration of the Greek word “baptizo.” Some American Baptists formed a Bible society in the 19th century with the goal of translating “baptizo” as “immerse” instead of transliterating it. They wanted to revise the English Bible in this manner, but the project didn’t get very far. Even the word “immerse” does not carry the full meaning of “baptizo,” which has the meaning not only of putting something under but also of bringing it up again. Some of the German versions have translated “baptizo” as “dip,”



which is a good translation, as it has the complete meaning of immersing something in water and then lifting it out, which is what scriptural baptism is, being symbolic of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The word "immersion" carries only half of the meaning of the Greek "baptizo." (The same is true of replacing the word "fetch," which is used 31 times in the KJV, with "bring" or "get," as modern English versions such as the NIV do. *Fetch* has the meaning of going and obtaining something and then bringing it back. Thus "bring" or "get" has only half of the meaning.)

- b. I do not say that the KJV could never be changed or that its words are always the very best that possibly could be (though I do not believe it will ever be replaced in this apostate hour). I do believe, though, that in all cases the translators chose a word or phrase that is a proper translation. I also know that I am not scholar enough to correct them. For 30 blessed years since I was saved, the KJV translators have been my teachers and I have been their humble student. I don't see that changing in this life, because I have only begun to learn what the KJV translators can teach me.

8. Is the King James Bible inspired?

**ANSWER:**

- a. The King James Bible was not *given by inspiration*. The term "inspiration" is used only one time in Scripture and that is in 2 Timothy 3:16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This describes the original process of the giving of Scripture. The same process is described in 2 Peter 1:19-21. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Inspiration was the supernatural process by which the Holy Spirit gave chosen words to holy men of old so that what they wrote was the inerrant Word of God. No translation can lay claim to this process. No translation is "given by inspiration."
- b. Translation is the process whereby men render the Spirit-inspired words of Scripture into other languages. If it is done prayerfully and carefully and properly by godly, capable believers, under submission to the Holy Spirit, the words of Scripture can be rendered accurately into another language and such a translation can be called the Word of God in that language. It can even be called the inspired Word of God in that language. But no translation is given by inspiration.

9. Could the King James Bible be revised again?

**ANSWER:**

- a. I do not believe that a better English language translation of the Masoretic Hebrew and the Greek Received Text could be made in our day. A clear turning point in church history was made in the 19th century with the blossoming of theological liberalism and in the 20th century with the rapid growth of the ecumenical movement.
- b. As for a new revision of the King James Bible, we are not opposed to it in theory if it were done after the fashion of the previous revisions in the 18th century. Language changes and it is not wrong to update the language, for example, to change “wot” to “know” and “noised” to “reported” and “quick” to “living.” This type of revision has been made before, and we see no reason in theory why it could not be done again.
- c. The best-known attempt to revise the King James Bible in recent times is the *New King James Bible*, but it was not a minor revision after the fashion of the former ones. It was a wholesale revision in order to allow Thomas Nelson to obtain a new copyright. It even dropped the distinction between the second person singular and plural (replacing the singular thee, thy, and thine with the modern and non-precise “you” in all places). Another revision is the *Modern King James Bible* or *King James Bible II* by Jay Green. This, too, in my estimation, takes far too many liberties. Dr. Green even proposes to make hundreds of textual changes based on the so-called Majority Greek text. I, for one, do not accept these revisions and I do not believe that such revision is needed.
- d. It is doubtful that a new revision will be made in these days that is both minor after the fashion of the former revisions and that will also be acceptable to the majority of users so that it could replace the existing KJV.
- e. Finally, I do not believe that a revision is necessary. Admittedly, the antiquated language in the KJV is difficult for new readers and especially for those who read English as a second or third language, but this difficulty can be overcome by the use of tools such as the *Concise King James Bible Dictionary* published by Way of Life Literature. See the next question.

10. Isn't the King James Bible too antiquated and difficult to understand today?

**ANSWER:**

- a. The KJV does have some antiquated words and forms of speech, but there are not too

many of these. The Trinitarian Bible Society publishes a list of 618 antiquated words. It is called *Bible Word List*. Most of these can be understood by considering the context. There are only about two hundred words in the KJV that have become so antiquated that they have changed meanings or have dropped entirely out of common usage, so that you really need a dictionary to understand them. Following are some examples:

carriages (Acts 21:15) = baggage  
charger (Mk. 6:25) = platter  
conversation (Gal. 1:13) = conduct  
devotions (Acts 17:23) = objects of worship  
do you to wit (2 Cor. 8:1) = make known to you  
fetched a compass (Acts 28:13) = circled  
leasing (Ps. 4:2) = lying  
let (2 Thess. 2:7) = restrain  
meat (Mat. 3:4) = food  
noised (Acts 2:6) = reported  
prevent (1 Thess. 4:15) = precede  
quick (Heb. 4:12) = living  
room (Lk. 14:7) = seat  
scrip (Mat. 10:10) = bag  
take no thought (Mat. 6:25) = be not anxious  
wot (Gen. 21:26) = know

b. The overall reading level of the KJV is not very high.

(1) The KJV is written on an 8th to 10th grade level. This was proven in the 1980s by a computer analysis made by Dr. Donald Waite. He ran several books of the KJV through the *Right Writer* program and found that Genesis 1, Exodus 1, and Romans 8 are on the 8th grade level; Romans 1 and Jude are on the 10th grade level; and Romans 3:1-23 is on the 6th grade level. I would guess that many parts of the four Gospels are on that same level if not lower.

(2) The KJV was rated as “very easy prose” by Dr. Rudolf Flesch. In the book *The Art of Plain Talk* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), Dr. Flesch analyzed the reading level of various documents and rated them on a scale from Very Easy to Very Difficult. He testified, “The best example of very easy prose (about 20 affixes per 200 words) is the King James Version of the Bible...” Dr. Flesch became famous with the publication of his book *Why Johnny Can’t Read*.

c. The KJV has a small vocabulary. While Shakespeare used a vocabulary of roughly 21,000 English words, the vocabulary of the King James Bible is composed of only

6,000 (Albert Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, 1910). This compares favorably to the vocabulary of the Hebrew Old Testament, which is 5,642 words, and the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, which is about 4,800 words.

- d. The KJV uses simple words; most are only one or two syllables. “The entire KJV averages 1.31 syllables and 3.968 letters per word. This word length puts the KJV in the same readability category as the children’s books” (D.A. Waite, Jr., *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version*, Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ, 1996).

(1) Consider Psalm 23, for example: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.”

Of the 119 words in this Psalm, only 24 are more than one syllables.

(2) Consider the Parable of the Rich Man in Luke 12:15-21. “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Of the 157 English words in this passage, only 22 are more than two syllables and most of those are only two.

- e. The most important thing in a Bible translation is not simple language but faithfulness to the original.

- (1) Dr. Donald Waite has made the following excellent comments on this subject: “The Bible is not a first grade primer. It is God’s book. It is a book that must be diligently read. It is only by ‘searching the Scriptures’ that we find what pertains to life and death. It tells of creation, of the mighty universe, of the future or the past, of the Mighty God and His wonders, of the Holy Spirit’s ministry among Christians, of the Son of God’s great sacrifice for sin, of home in Heaven for the believer, and of a fiery hell for the unsaved. How dare we assume that His Word can be capsulated in a comic book [or a version that reads ‘like the morning newspaper’]. Some people say they like a particular version because ‘it’s more readable.’ Now, readability is one thing, but does the readability conform to what’s in the original Greek and Hebrew language? You can have a lot of readability, but if it doesn’t match up with what God has said, it’s of no profit. In the King James Bible, the words match what God has said. You may say it’s difficult to read, but study it out. [At times it’s] hard in the Hebrew and Greek and, perhaps, even in the English in the King James Bible. But to change it around just to make it simple, or interpreting it instead of translating it, is wrong. You’ve got lots of interpretation, but we don’t want that in a translation. We want exactly what God said in the Hebrew or Greek brought over into English” (Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*, p. 242).
  - (2) Also consider this statement by Leland Ryken, a professor of English at Wheaton College: “An English Bible translation should strive for maximum readability ONLY WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF ACCURATELY EXPRESSING WHAT THE ORIGINAL ACTUALLY SAYS, including the difficulty inherent in the original text. The crucial question that should govern translation is what the original authors actually wrote, not our speculations over how they would express themselves today or how we would express the content of the Bible. The fact that the New Testament was written in *koine* Greek should not lead translators to translate the Bible in a uniformly colloquial style. Finally, a good translation does not attempt to make the Bible simpler than it was for the original audience” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 100, 101).
- f. A large part of the antiquated feel of the King James Bible is its usage of the second person singular pronominal forms, “thee,” “thou,” and “thine.”
- (1) These should be retained because their use allows the distinction in English between singular and plural pronouns. In other words, “you” and “ye” are plural, while “thou” and “thine” are singular. The singular forms have disappeared from contemporary English, so that there is no difference today between “you” plural and “you” singular. The Hebrew and Greek languages, though, have both a singular and plural form of the pronoun.

- (2) The use of *thee*, *thou*, *thine* was already antiquated when the King James Bible was translated. The King James translators did not adopt *thee*, *thou*, *thine* because those forms were common to their day, but because they wanted to faithfully translate the original Scripture text into English.
- (a) These expressions had already dropped out of common English by 1611 when the King James Bible was published. We can see this by reading the translator's Preface and other writings by the translators. The distinction between the singular and plural in English began in the late 13th century and continued commonly until the 1500s.
  - (b) The British biblical scholar J.B. Lightfoot wrote, "Indeed, we may take courage from the fact that the language of our English Bible is not the language of the age in which the translators lived, but in its grand simplicity stands out in contrast to the ornate and often affected diction of the literature of the time" (*The Divine Original*, Trinitarian Bible Society, London, England).
  - (c) "It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES. The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY BIBLICAL" (Oswald T. Allis, "Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version Desirable?" See the Bible Version section of the *End Times Apostasy Database* at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org>).
  - (d) Linguistic scholar A.T. Robertson made the following important observation about the King James Bible: "No one today speaks the English of the Authorised Version, or ever did for that matter, for though, like Shakespeare, it is the pure Anglo-Saxon, yet unlike Shakespeare IT REPRODUCES TO A REMARKABLE EXTENT THE SPIRIT AND LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 56).
  - (e) The style of the King James Bible goes back to the masterly work of William Tyndale in the early 16th century. British historian James Froude observes: "Of the translation itself (the 1611), though since that time it has been many

times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majesty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndale. Lying, while engaged in that great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air” (Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, III, p. 84).

- (3) Following are some examples of how important it is to retain the distinction between second person singular and plural. These examples (excepting Isaiah 7:14) are adapted from the book *Archaic or Accurate: Modern Translations of the Bible and You versus Thee in the Language of Worship*, edited by J.P. Thackway, and published by The Bible League of England:

Exodus 4:15. “THOU shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with THY mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach YOU what YE shall do.” THOU and THY refer to Moses, but YOU and YE refer to the nation Israel.

Exodus 29:42. “This shalt be a continual burnt offering throughout YOUR generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD where I will meet YOU, to speak there unto THEE.” YOU, referring to the children of Israel, is explained in the following verse, but THEE refers to Moses, who had the holy privilege of hearing the words of God directly (Lev. 1:1).

2 Samuel 7:23. “And what one nation in the earth is like THY people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for YOU great things and terrible, for THY land, before THY people, which THOU redeemedst to THEE from Egypt.” Here David is in prayer to God, thus accounting for the singular words THY and THOU, referring to God. David turns his attention to the people Israel when he uses the plural YOU. If “you” were used throughout, the reader would not be able to understand who David was addressing.

Isaiah 7:14. “Therefore the Lord himself shall give YOU a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” There is a long-running debate by liberal and even New Evangelical scholars that Isaiah

7:14 is only secondarily a Messianic prophecy and that its primary fulfillment was in Isaiah's day. For example, the note in the *NIV Study Bible* says of the word virgin: "May refer to a young woman betrothed to Isaiah (8:3), who was to become his second wife (his first wife presumably having died after Shear-jashub was born)." In fact, the prophecy is not directed to Isaiah personally but to the nation Israel as a whole, and this is clear in the KJV, because it indicates properly that "YOU" is plural, not singular. This important information is lost in the modern English versions, including the New King James.

Matthew 26:64. "Jesus saith unto him, THOU hast said: nevertheless I say unto YOU, Hereafter shall YE see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The singular THOU refers to the high priest, but the plural YOU refers to all who will see Christ in the day of His glory (Rev. 1:7).

Luke 22:31-32. "The Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have YOU, that he may sift YOU as wheat: but I have prayed for THEE, that THY faith fail not: and when THOU art converted, strengthen THY brethren." Satan's desire was directed to all the apostles (YOU), but the Lord prays for each individually and for Peter specifically (THEE, THY).

John 3:7. "Marvel not that I said unto THEE, YE must be born again." The message was spoken to an individual (THEE), Nicodemus, but the message encompassed all men (YE). The same thing occurs in verse 11, where we read, "I say unto THEE ... that YE receive not our witness."

1 Corinthians 8:9-12. "Take heed lest ... this liberty of YOURS ... if any man see THEE which hath knowledge ... through THY knowledge ... But when YE sin." The plural YOURS refers to the church members in general, but the Holy Spirit personalizes the exhortation by changing to the singular THEE and THY.

2 Timothy 4:22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with THY spirit. Grace be with YOU." The singular THY refers to Timothy, to whom the epistle was written (2 Tim. 1:1), but the plural YOU refers to others who were also included in Paul's final greetings, "Priscilla and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus" (2 Tim. 4:19).

Titus 3:15. "All that are with me salute THEE. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with YOU all." Here, the singular THEE refers to Titus, but the plural YOU refers to the church in Crete (Tit. 1:5), and to all who loved Paul in the faith.



Philemon 21-25. “Having confidence in THY obedience I wrote unto THEE, knowing that THOU wilt also do more than I say ... I trust that through YOUR prayers I shall be given unto YOU ... There salute THEE ... the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with YOUR spirit.” The singular THEE refers to Philemon, but as this short letter was also addressed to “Apphia ... Archippus ... and to the church in thy house” (v. 2), the plural form YOU, YOUR is used in verses 3, 22, and 25.

- g. Previous generations educated the people UP TO the Bible, and that is what we should do today. It is my conviction that we don’t need a new translation today; we need to renew our study of the excellent one that we already have. “Instead of lowering the Bible to a lowest common denominator, why should we not educate people to rise to the level required to experience the Bible in its full richness and exaltation? Instead of expecting the least from Bible readers, we should expect the most from them. The greatness of the Bible requires the best, not the least. ... The most difficult of modern English translations -- the King James -- is used most by segments of our society that are relatively uneducated as defined by formal education. ... research has shown repeatedly that people are capable of rising to surprising and even amazing abilities to read and master a subject that is important to them. ... Previous generations did not find the King James Bible, with its theological heaviness, beyond their comprehension. Nor do readers and congregations who continue to use the King James translation find it incomprehensible. Neither of my parents finished grade school, and they learned to understand the King James Bible from their reading of it and the preaching they heard based on it. We do not need to assume a theologically inept readership for the Bible. Furthermore, if modern readers are less adept at theology than they can and should be, it is the task of the church to educate them, not to give them Bible translations that will permanently deprive them of the theological content that is really present in the Bible” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 107, 109).
- h. Though the terms “thou” and “thine” have been out of common usage of the English language for more than 400 years, it was only a few decades ago that people started complaining about it. Even then it was done largely at the prompting of Bible publishers greedy to make ever larger profits by introducing an ever more bewildering smorgasbord of up-to-date Bibles. Believers of the 1600s, 1700s, 1800s, and even most of the 1900s, loved the “quaint” old English of the King James Bible. They did not think it strange that their Bible did not sound like the morning newspaper. It is the Bible! It was written thousands of years ago! It is the Word of the eternal God! It is not the morning newspaper! Why, pray tell, should it sound like one? “I believe that it is correct for an English translation to preserve an appropriate archaic flavor as a way of preserving the distance between us and the

biblical world. Joseph Wood Krutch used an evocative formula in connection with the King James Bible when he spoke of ‘an appropriate flavor of a past time’” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 182).

- i. There are many tools available to help people understand the KJV. Following are a few of these:

The Bible Word List from the Trinitarian Bible Society of London, England. This is a pamphlet that defines 618 antiquated words in the King James Bible. See <http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org/>.

The Concise King James Bible Dictionary, available from Way of Life Literature. Designed to fit in a Bible case, its convenient size makes it easy to use, because it can be kept right with one’s Bible. It includes an extensive list of King James Bible words that have changed meaning since 1611, plus all of the doctrinal terms and much more. Not only does it define individual Bible words but also many of the phrases and descriptive statements that are no longer a part of contemporary English usage, such as “superfluity of naughtiness,” “at your hand,” “taken with the manner,” and “in the gate.” It is an excellent small Bible dictionary for both new and older Christians. Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061-0368. 866-295-4143, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance. In my estimation, *Strong’s* is the most important Bible study tool ever published. Not only is it exhaustive in its treatment of the words of the English Bible, but it also links the English words to an exceptional dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek terms underlying the English. One does not have to know the Greek and Hebrew alphabets to use Strong’s dictionary; he developed a masterly apparatus whereby each Greek and Hebrew word is assigned a number, and the student can thus search for Greek and Hebrew terms by numbers. The dictionary gives a concise definition of the Greek or Hebrew word as well as a list of how word is translated at various places in the English Bible.

The Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity. Another tool for studying the King James Bible is the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*. (The above-mentioned *Concise King James Bible* was based on the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*.) This lovely hard cover Bible encyclopedia contains 560 pages (8.5X11) of information, over 5,500 entries, and over 6,000 cross-references. Twenty-five years of research has gone into this one-of-a-kind reference tool. It is the only Bible dictionary/ encyclopedia written by a fundamental Baptist and based strictly upon the King James Bible. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology, plus it features many other areas of research not often covered in a single volume Bible reference tool. Subjects

include Bible versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social Issues and Practical Christian Living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. The Christian will be helped and fortified in his faith through this Encyclopedia. It does not correct the Authorized nor does it undermine the fundamental Baptist's doctrines and practices as many study tools do. Many preachers have told us that apart from *Strong's Concordance*, the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia* is their favorite study tool. A missionary told us that if he could save only one study book out of his library, it would be our encyclopedia. An evangelist in South Dakota wrote: "If I were going to the mission field and could carry only three books, they would be the Strong's concordance, a hymnal, and the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia*." Missionary author Jack Moorman says: "The encyclopedia is excellent and will meet a real need. The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org (e-mail), <http://www.wayoflife.org> (web site).

For more questions and answers on this subject see the *The Bible Version Question Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature. This book gives accurate and in-depth answers to more than 80 of the most common and important questions on this important topic.

## **Conclusion**

The King James Bible is not merely another translation. It has a glorious and unmatched heritage. It came out of the fires of persecution, out of an age of revival and faith, by a peerless process of translation. Its Hebrew and Greek texts represent the traditional text that has come down to us through the age. All of this is in contrast to the modern versions.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART V. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE OF ITS UNMATCHED HERITAGE (from Wycliffe to 1611)**

1. How many complete New Testaments in English existed before John Wycliffe's?
2. In what century did the king of England submit to the Pope? What was the name of the Pope?
3. What were the three periods of the English language?
4. When did the period of modern English begin?
5. In what year did William the Conqueror defeat the English and bring French influence into England?
6. The Lindisfarne Gospels were written in Latin. Why are these Gospels important in the history of Bible translation in English?
7. In what century did John Wycliffe live?
8. What year was the Wycliffe New Testament finished?
9. In what university did Wycliffe teach theology?
10. Why was Wycliffe persecuted by the Catholic Church?

11. What was Wycliffe's foundational doctrine?
12. What did Wycliffe think about the papacy?
13. When Wycliffe argued in favor of the translation of the Bible into the vernacular languages, he said, "Did not the ---- give the Word of God at first in the ----- of the nations to whom it was addressed?"
14. Which Pope issued five bulls against Wycliffe?
15. What did Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Arundel say about Wycliffe?
16. For what reason did John of Gaunt remove his protection from Wycliffe?
17. What was the Papal Schism and why did this help Wycliffe?
18. Why was the trial against Wycliffe in 1382 called "the Blackfriars' Synod"?
19. What memorial event occurred at the beginning of this trial?
20. In the Wycliffe New Testament, where was the book of Acts located?
21. In what century was the Wycliffe Bible first printed?
22. What are the terms by which the original Wycliffe Bible is distinguished from the revisions?
23. Was the Wycliffe Bible exactly the same textually as the King James Bible?
24. What language was the Wycliffe Bible translated from?
25. What are three phrases in the King James Bible that can be traced back to the Wycliffe?
26. Why is it not possible to find John Wycliffe's burial place today?
27. What does it mean that the term "Lollard" was a broad, catchall word?
28. Historian John Foxe says one of the articles of faith among the Lollards was "that faith ought to precede baptism." How does this prove that they had renounced infant baptism?
29. In what year was a law passed in England that required the burning of "heretics"?
30. In what year did the *Constitutions of Arundel* make it illegal to translate the Bible into English in England?
31. What man gave his name to these Constitutions and what position did he hold?
32. Why was the tower at the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Palace named Lollard's Tower?
33. Why is John Wycliffe called the Morningstar of the Reformation?
34. What was the first English New Testament to be printed?
35. What was the first English New Testament translated from Greek?
36. In what year was the first Bible printed (in Latin)?
37. What type of idols did the people in England worship before the Reformation?
38. St. Peter's Basilica was built through the sale of what?
39. William Tyndale was born in what part of England?
40. That part of England was filled with what sort of teaching?
41. At which university was Tyndale educated?
42. How many languages could Tyndale speak fluently?
43. At what place did Tyndale get a job as tutor and chaplain after he graduated from school?
44. The Roman Catholic Church did not allow the people to read the Bible in English, but it did allow a few books such as "The Mirror of the Life of Christ" by Nicholas Love. Who was the hero in this book?
45. Tyndale was threatened for preaching heresy in 1522; he said the Chancellor "rated me as though I had been a" what?

46. When a Catholic priest told Tyndale that they were better without God's laws than the popes," what famous reply did Tyndale give? "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a --- that ----- - ----- shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest."
47. Tyndale believed that for baptism to be proper it had to be preceded by repentance, faith and confession. How does this overthrow infant baptism?
48. What was Tyndale's regular pastime on Mondays and Saturdays?
49. Tyndale testified that "I never altered --- ----- of God's Word against my conscience; nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honor, or riches, might be given me."
50. What ecclesiastical leader did Tyndale approach in London in an attempt to gain permission to translate the Bible into English?
51. What was the name of the businessman who assisted Tyndale in London?
52. At which church in London did Tyndale preach during his stay there?
53. After Tyndale began printing his New Testament in 1525 in Cologne, what happened to force him to flee to another city?
54. How large was the Tyndale New Testament?
55. What do the ecclesiastical authorities in England do when the Tyndale New Testaments began to be smuggled in from Europe?
56. When Humphrie Munmouth was arrested in 1528, he was charged with believing what about faith and salvation?
57. In *The Practice of Prelates*, Tyndale likened the Pope to what?
58. According to historian Christopher Anderson, what did Anne Boleyn do that no man of influence in England did during William Tyndale's life?
59. What role did Anne Boleyn have in the royal proclamation of 1535 that the Bible should be printed and deposited in every church?
60. Where was Tyndale living when he was arrested?
61. What was the name of the man who falsely befriended Tyndale and sold him out to the Roman Catholic authorities?
62. In what town and country was Tyndale imprisoned in the castle?
63. How long was he imprisoned?
64. How was Tyndale put to death and in what year?
65. According to a computer study done in 1998, what percentage of the King James Bible is from Tyndale?
66. What effect has the Tyndale Bible had on the English language?
67. What are three common English expressions that were coined by Tyndale?
68. Between 1525 and 1640, an estimated how many English Bibles and Bible portions were printed?
69. What did William Maldon's father do to him when he persisting in reading the Tyndale New Testament?
70. What edition of the Tyndale Bible was brought to America by its first settlers?
71. In what year was the first English Bible printed in America?
72. The frontispiece of the 1792 American Self-Interpreting Bible a woman representing America extending her right hand to receive what?

73. The Webster American Dictionary was filled with quotations from which Bible?
74. How many times was Miles Coverdale exiled from England for his faith?
75. Coverdale was the chaplain to which one of Henry VIII's former wives?
76. What was the first printed entire English Bible and in what year was it published?
77. What are two words that were brought into the King James Bible from Coverdale?
78. What did Coverdale say about the Apocryphal Books?
79. Where did the Matthew's Bible get its name?
80. Thomas Matthew was a pen name for what man?
81. In what year was this man put to death and during the reign of what queen?
82. The Great Bible was an edition of what English Bible?
83. Why was it also called "the chained Bible"?
84. Why were the translators of the Geneva Bible living in Geneva during the reign of Queen Mary?
85. What other Reformation Bibles were printed in Geneva?
86. In what year was the entire Geneva Bible printed?
87. Why was the original Geneva Bible called "the Breeches Bible"?
88. In what three ways was the Geneva a milestone in the English Bible?
89. What was the name of the bishop who oversaw the Bishops Bible?
90. What was the objective of the bishops involved in this project?
91. What was the name of the king who authorized the production of the King James Bible?
92. What was this king's mother's name?
93. How many children did this king have?
94. What was the Gunpowder Plot?
95. What was the name of the palace where the conference was held in 1604 at which the king decided to approve the production of the new Bible translation?
96. What was the name of the Puritan who proposed the new Bible translation to the king?
97. Roughly how many translators worked on the King James Bible?
98. The work was divided between how many companies of translators?
99. Alexander McClure said that in the early 17th century, the English language "had at last reached the very ----- of its ----- and -----."
100. In 1820 J.W. Whittaker said that in the 17th century "the sacred language was at that time cultivated to a far greater extent in England than it has ---- ---- ----."
101. What was different about scholarship in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in that day than today?
102. What occurred in the field of biblical scholarship since the 19th century which makes it less possible to translate the Bible properly than in the 17th century?
103. In the 19th century, Charles Philpot warned that the learned men and scholars of his day "are notoriously either tainted with ----- or -----."
104. In 2003, Adam Nicholson said, "The churches and biblical scholarship have, by and large, abandoned the ----- of ---- which created this translation [the KJV]."
105. What six English versions did the King James Bible translators use?
106. Each part of the King James Bible was examined at least how many times?
107. What interesting thing happened to KJV Bible translator Richard Kilby?

108. Where is the Jerusalem Chamber located, where some of the work was done on the KJV?
109. At Oxford and Cambridge in those days, what percentage of the lectures were in English?
110. Which KJV translator was the master of 15 languages?
111. Which KJV translator was famed for his Arabic learning?
112. Which KJV translator was reading the entire Hebrew Bible at age five?
113. Which KJV translator gave up his inheritance to follow his Protestant faith?
114. Which KJV translator was called “the great Grecian”?
115. Which KJV translator was known as “a prodigy of literature”?
116. Which KJV translator had made an adventurous trip across the sea to Puerto Rico?
117. Which KJV translator had become a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, at age 17?
118. Which KJV translator was the first to publish the entire works of Chrysostom?
119. Which KJV translator knew Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Latin, Greek, and Arabic as well as his own mother tongue?
120. In whom did the King James men trust for the wisdom to translate the Bible?
121. Did the KJV translators believe that the Bible is the infallibly inspired Word of God?
122. Where can we find the statement of what the KJV translators believed about the Bible’s inspiration?
123. What part did King James I have in the translation?
124. Harvard University Press chose the King James Bible for the *Literary Guide to the Bible* in 1987 because “it is still arguably the version that best preserves the ----- of the original languages.”
125. Dr. Edward Hills said the style of the King James Bible was not that of its time in 1611 but “its style is that of the ----- and of the -----.”
126. Hills said “the language of the Bible should be ----- as well as -----.”
127. At the end of the lengthy preface to the King James Bible, what did the translators admonish their readers to do what?
128. Was the King James Bible copyrighted?
129. What type of changes has been made to the King James Bible since 1611?
130. The King James Bible is written on what level?
131. Shakespeare used a vocabulary of roughly ----- English words, whereas the King James Bible used only about ----.
132. What is the most important thing in Bible translation, simplicity or faithfulness?
133. Why did the King James translators use thee, thou, and thine? What benefit do these old words have?
134. In John 3:7, the Lord Jesus used “thee” and “ye.” Why did He use these different pronouns?

## **VI. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE MODERN VERSIONS ARE BUILT UPON A FOUNDATION OF DECEPTION: A LOOK AT THE ENGLISH REVISED VERSION**

The first prominent English version based on the critical type Greek text was the English Revised Version (ERV) of 1881. All subsequent modern English versions are built upon this foundation. This includes the American Standard Version of 1901, the Revised Standard Version of 1952, the New American Standard Version of 1960, the New International Version of 1978, and dozens more. Each of these follows in the footsteps of the English Revised Version of 1881 in that it is built upon the same basic type of Greek text and was published to compete with the King James Bible.

To understand the modern English versions, therefore, we need to look more carefully at the grandfather of them all, the English Revised.

### **Section Summary**

1. The environment in which the English Revised Version was created
2. The deception associated with the English Revised Version
3. The modernism associated with the English Revised Version

### **The Environment in which the English Revised Version Was Created**

As the 19th century progressed, the call for a revision of the KJV grew louder. The first official proposal for revision came in March 1856. From 1856-1858 more than 20 publications called for a revision.

It is important to understand that this was a time of apostasy and confusion. THEOLOGICAL RATIONALISM SPREAD LIKE IVY, the growth stages of which have been described as sleeping, creeping, and leaping. That is what happened with modernism. It was planted in the 18th century and slept for a time. It began to creep in the early 19th century; and from the middle to the end of that century it leaped across the Christian landscape. By the end of the 19th century it was so well entrenched in high places of Christian scholarship in British Protestant and Baptist denominations that it was able to win the day. Not only were many scholars themselves afflicted with modernistic views of the Bible, but a vast number of others, not themselves modernistic in theology, were nonetheless too spiritually weak to put up an effective protest against modernism. Instead, they were willing to work hand-in-hand with the modernists, ignoring God's warnings, "evil communications corrupt good manners" and "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

We have documented this in *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.



## The Deception Associated with the English Revised Version

1. The general mood of churches in England in the 19th century did not favor the critical Greek text that was being promoted by men like Tregelles and was not supportive of a wholesale revision of the King James Bible.

- a. When a revision was proposed in the Lower House of Convocation of the Anglican Church in March 1856, it “met with comparatively little support” (H. Wheeler Robinson, *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, pp. 236-238).
- b. When a revision was again proposed in February 1870 by the Southern Province of the Church of England, a great debate ensued and four basic positions were revealed:
  - (1) Some were for NO revision. Of these, some wanted no revision *ever*, while others only wanted no revision *at that time*.
  - (2) Others were for a SLIGHT revision. Of these, there were differences pertaining to exactly *how* slight and exactly *which* changes to make.
  - (3) A small minority were for CONSIDERABLE revision. Again, there was great variety within this group as to the precise nature of such a revision.
  - (4) An extreme minority were for a TOTAL revision along the lines of the most radical critical Greek texts.
- c. Following are a few examples of how staunchly the critical Greek text and any radical revision of the KJV were being resisted. We have given dozens of these in the book *For Love of the Bible: The Defense of the King James Bible and the Received Text from 1800 to Present* (available from Way of Life Literature).

### The example of John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick

- (1) In 1829 Jebb had stated: “Let individuals give new versions ... but IN DAYS OF EPIDEMIC QUACKERY, let our authorized version be kept inviolate, and guarded as the apple of our eye” (John Jebb, *Life of John Jebb*, ii, p. 454; cited by Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version of the New Testament*, pp. 21, 22).
- (2) Dr. Jebb continued to oppose the revision of the Authorized Bible. He said that it was “*a fatal thing that a version, of which we have been now in possession for more than 250 years, should be subject to the criticism of THIS VERY HASTY AND NOT VERY ORTHODOX AGE*” (John Stoughton, *Our English Bible*, p. 288).

### The example of Henry John Todd

- (1) In 1819 Todd, chaplain to the king of England and keeper of the Archbishop of Canterbury's records, published *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*. This work was occasioned by the clamor of some who wanted to correct the Received Greek New Testament and the King James Bible on the basis of modern textual criticism. This clamoring gradually increased among a relatively small segment of influential scholars through the 19th century and resulted, ultimately, in the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament and the English Revised Version of 1881. Todd understood that modern textual criticism was intimately associated with theological heresy. I searched for Todd's treatise for five years before locating it in the British Library and having a copy made for my personal library.
- (2) Consider the following important excerpt: "For when WE SEE MEN OF THE MOST LATITUDINARIAN PRINCIPLES UNIFORMLY PRESSING FORWARD THIS DANGEROUS PROPOSAL; when we see the most unbounded panegyrics [praise] bestowed on THOSE, WHO HAVE CONVERTED THE MOSAIC HISTORY INTO ALLEGORY, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO SOCINIANISM; when we see these attempts studiously fostered, and applauded, by the advocates for this projected [Bible] revision; WE MUST CONJECTURE, THAT SOMETHING MORE IS MEANT THAN A CORRECTION OF MISTAKES, OR AN IMPROVEMENT OF DICTION. Those doctrines, the demolition of which we know to be, in late instances, the grand object of such innovators when they propose alterations in articles of faith, or correction of liturgical forms, are surely in still greater danger when attempted, by the same men, under the distant approaches of a revision of our English Bible (Todd, *A Vindication of Our Authorized Translation and Translators of the Bible*, 1819, pp. 79, 80). Note: Socinianism was a modern revival of the ancient Arian heresy that denies the full deity of Jesus Christ. It was founded in the 16th century by Laelius Socinius and his nephew Faustus.
- (3) Todd represented the view of many 19th century men who understood that the critical Greek New Testament was a doctrinal issue.

### The example of Joseph Charles Philpot (1802-1869)

- (1) Philpot was a minister among the Gospel Standard Baptists, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and editor of *The Gospel Standard* from 1840-1869.
- (2) He exhibited a rare combination. He was an Oxford-educated scholar, considered one of the greatest Hebrew and Greek masters of his day, and he was also a deeply spiritual man "with a sanctified discernment of the evil trend of the apostate church."

- (3) Writing in the *Gospel Standard* in April 1857, Philpot gave the following testimony to the excellence of the Authorized Version of 1611: “We cannot but admire the great faithfulness of our translators in so scrupulously adhering to the exact words of the Holy Spirit, and when they were necessarily compelled to supply the ellipses in the original, to point out that they had done so by marking the word in italic characters. By so doing, they engaged themselves, as by bond, TO GIVE THE WORD OF GOD IN ITS STRICT ORIGINAL PURITY; and yet, as thorough scholars in the original tongues, and complete masters of their own, THEY WERE ENABLED TO GIVE US A VERSION ADMIRABLE NOT ONLY FOR ITS STRICT FIDELITY, BUT FOR ITS ELOQUENCE, GRANDEUR, AND BEAUTY.”
- (4) Philpot gave six reasons for rejecting a revision of the King James Bible, and his warnings of what would occur if such a revision were popularized have proven to be uncannily accurate. Consider:
- (a) Who are to undertake it [a revision of the KJV] ... Of course they must be learned men, great critics, scholars, and divines. BUT THESE ARE NOTORIOUSLY EITHER TAINTED WITH POKERY OR INFIDELITY. Where are the men, learned, yet sound in Truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so important a work? And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.
  - (b) Again, IT WOULD UNSETTLE THE MINDS OF THOUSANDS, AS TO WHICH WAS THE WORD OF GOD—the old translation or the new. What a door it would open for the workings of infidelity, or the temptations of Satan! What a gloom, too, it would cast over the minds of many of God’s saints, to have those passages which had been applied to their souls translated in a different way, and how it would seem to shake all their experience of the power and preciousness of God’s Word!
  - (c) But besides all this, THERE WOULD BE TWO BIBLES SPREAD THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND, the old and the new, and what confusion would this create in almost every place! At present, all sects and denominations agree in acknowledging our present version as to the standard of appeal. Nothing settles disputes so soon as when the contending parties have confidence in the same umpire and are willing to abide by his decision. But this Judge of all dispute, this Umpire of all controversy would cease to be the looser of strife if present acknowledged authority were put an end to by a rival.
  - (d) If the new translation were once to begin, where would it end? It is good to let well enough alone, as it is easier to mar than to mend. ... The

Socinianising Neologian would blot out ‘GOD’ in 1 Tim. 3.16, and strike out 1 John 5.7, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit his Tractarian views. ... Once set up a notice, ‘The Old Bible to be mended,’ and there would be plenty of workmen, who trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces. ... All our good Bible terms would be so mutilated that they would cease to convey the Spirit’s meaning and INSTEAD OF THE NOBLE SIMPLICITY, FAITHFULNESS, AND TRUTH OF OUR PRESENT VERSION, WE SHOULD HAVE A BIBLE THAT NOBODY WOULD ACCEPT AS THE WORD OF GOD, TO WHICH NONE COULD SAFELY APPEAL, AND ON WHICH NONE IMPLICITLY RELY.

- (e) Instead of our good old Saxon Bible, simple and solid, with few words obsolete, and alike majestic and beautiful, WE SHOULD HAVE A MODERN ENGLISH TRANSLATION IN PERT AND FLIPPANT LANGUAGE OF THE DAY. ...
- (f) THE PRESENT ENGLISH BIBLE (AUTHORIZED VERSION) ... IS, WE BELIEVE, THE GRAND BULWARK OF PROTESTANTISM; the safeguard of the Gospel, and the treasure of the church; and we should be traitors in every sense of the word if we consented to give it up to be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness (Joseph Charles Philpot, “The Authorized Version of 1611,” *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857; reprinted in *The Authorized Version—1611 vs. The New English Bible: a Critical Review*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1961). [NOTE: Puseyites was another term for the Oxford Movement, the back to Rome movement within the Anglican Church. It was named for Edward Pusey, an influential personality within the movement. German Neologians refers to German modernists who were pursuing every new heresy; neology is a love of novelty for novelty’s sake.]

2. Various things prepared the way for and broke down the resistance to the revision of the King James Bible.

- a. There were repeated calls for revision from scholars committed to the critical texts. This reminds us of the communist principle, “Say it loud and say it often.” Some of the following is from H. Wheeler Robison’s *Ancient and English Versions of the Bible*, 236-238:
  - (1) In *The Eclectic Review* for January 1809, Dr. John Pye Smith, President of Homerton Congregational College, made a strong appeal for an authoritative revision.
  - (2) In 1810 Dr. Herbert Marsh, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge,

called for a revision in his *Lectures on the Criticism and Interpretation of the Bible*.

- (3) In 1819 Sir James B. Burges supported the replacement of the Authorized Version in his *Reasons in Favour of a New Translation of the Scriptures*.
  - (4) In 1832 fresh stimulus was given to the discussion by a booklet entitled *Hints for an Improved Translation of the New Testament* by the Rev. Jas. Scholefield, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge. This was re-published in 1836 and 1849.
  - (5) In 1839 some caustic remarks regarding the archaic vocabulary and literary quality of the Authorized Version were offered by Henry Hallam in the third volume of his *Literature of Europe*.
  - (6) In 1856 a call for revision was made by Canon William Selwyn of Ely and Cambridge. That year he published his *Notes on the Proposed Amendment of the Authorized Version*.
  - (7) In 1858, Archbishop Richard Trench joined the fray with the publication of *On the Authorized Version of the New Testament, in connexion with some recent Proposals for its Revision*.
- b. To stir up interest in a revision of the King James Bible a preliminary edition was made of some portions and published between 1857 and 1863. This work has been called “the germ of the 1881 revision.”
- (1) This work was called *Revision of the Authorized Version, by Five Clergymen*. The translators were Charles Ellicott (later the New Testament Revision Committee Chairman), Henry Alford, W.H.G. Humphry, John Barrow, and G. Moberly. In the Preface they actually praised the King James Bible, calling it “so laborious, so generally accurate, so close, abhorrent of paraphrase, so grave and weighty in word and rhythm, so intimately bound up with the religious convictions and associations of the English people” (Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible*, p. 135, f. 1).
  - (2) In messages delivered in 1903, Charles Ellicott looked back on the *Revision of the Authorized Version by Five Clergymen* and revealed the following important facts:
    - (a) Those involved in the project understood that there was not a great mood among Christians in general for a revision of the King James Bible and that many were afraid that any official revision would go beyond the bounds of

making minor improvements; THEIR PROJECT WAS THEREFORE AN ATTEMPT TO MODIFY THIS MOOD AND TO MANIPULATE THE PEOPLE IN THIS REGARD. “There was thus a real danger, unless some forward step was quickly and prudently taken that the excitement might gradually evaporate and the movement for revision might die out. ... Ernest Hawkins ... came forward and persuaded a few of us ... to combine and publish a version of one of the books of the New Testament which might practically demonstrate to friends and to opponents what sort of a revision seemed desirable under existing circumstances” (Ellicott, *Addresses on the Revised Version of Holy Scripture*, 1903, pp. 11-14).

- (b) Ellicott’s own statement in 1903 proved that the earlier test revision was a deceptive work. Though the 1857-63 revision was only a very minor revision of the King James Bible and was not based on a different Greek text, it was put forth as an example of the type of revision that would be made if the people agreed. “The work in fact became a kind of object lesson. It showed plainly that ... THE INTRODUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS IN REGARD OF ACCURACY DID NOT INVOLVE, EITHER IN QUANTITY OR QUALITY, THE CHANGES THAT WERE GENERALLY APPREHENDED. ... IN REGARD OF THE GREEK TEXT BUT LITTLE CHANGE WAS INTRODUCED. The basis of our translation was the third edition of Stephens ... As we ourselves state in the preface, ‘OUR OBJECT WAS TO REVISE A VERSION, NOT TO FRAME A TEXT’ (Ellicott, *Addresses on the Revised Version of Holy Scripture*, 1903, pp. 11-14). This was a great deception, because their ultimate goal was indeed to “frame a text.”
- (c) Ellicott said the 1857-63 *Revision of the Authorized Version, by Five Clergymen* showed “that scholars of different habits of thought could work without friction or difficulty.” Why didn’t he admit that the 1857-63 revision was a misrepresentation in this matter as well and that it absolutely was NOT an example of what finally occurred in the formal Revision Committee, which was characterized by bitter infighting and wrangling and contention from beginning to end? The textual readings chosen to replace the Greek Received Text did not enjoy unanimity of scholarship, or anything even close to unanimity.

c. The revision work in America was used to stir up interest in a revision in England.

- (1) In June 1850 the American Bible Union was founded. This was a split off of the American and Foreign Bible Society, and a chief objective was the revision of the English Bible. It was the refusal of the American and Foreign Bible Society to authorize such a revision that led to the formation of the American Bible Union by men who were committed to this cause.

- (2) Two principles of the proposed revision were as follows:
- (a) The revision was to be based on the critical Greek New Testament.
  - (b) The revision was to translate the Greek word “baptizo” as “immerse.”
- (3) The first officers of the Union were Spencer H. Cone (President), William H. Wyckoff (Corresponding Secretary), William Colgate (Treasurer) (Colgate was in the Church of Christ), E.S. Whitney (Recording Secretary), and Syvester Pier (Auditor).
- (4) Consider the translators of the American Bible Union translation.
- (a) They represented the following denominations: Baptist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Church of Christ or Disciples of Christ (who taught baptismal regeneration), Seventh-day Baptists, Episcopalian, and German Reformed.
  - (b) In Europe the translators were William Peechey, Joseph Angus, T.J. Gray, T. Boys, A.S. Thelwall, Francis Clowes, F.W. Gotch, James Patterson.
  - (c) In America the translators were Thomas J. Conant, Philip Schaff, Howard Osgood, Horatio B. Hackett, Asahel C. Kendrick, J.L. Dagg, John Lilhe, O.B. Judd, Joseph Muenscher. John Forsyth, W.P. Strickland, James Shannon, E.S. Gallup, E. Adkins, M.K. Pendleton, N.H. Whiting, Alexander Campbell (father of the Campbellites or Churches of Christ, which preach baptismal regeneration and a grace plus works gospel), Edward Maturin, E. Lord, and S.E. Shepard.
  - (d) Many of these men had studied in Germany at the feet of German rationalists. Philip Schaff had studied in Germany. Horatio Hackett had spent two years at Halle and Berlin, “pursuing linguistic and Biblical studies, attending the lectures of Tholuck, Gesenius, Neander and Hengstenberg” (Armitage). Hackett was the editor-in-chief of the American edition of *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*, which contained modernistic notes. Thomas Conant had spent 18 months in Germany in 1841-42. Howard Osgood spent three years studying in Germany. Osgood Asahel Kendrick studied in Germany and other places in Europe from 1852-54. Kendrick published *An Introduction to the Greek Language* and was translator and editor of Olshausen’s *Commentary of the New Testament* and of Lange’s *Biblical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Conant, Osgood, Hackett, and Kendrick were professors at Rochester Theological Seminary.
- (5) In 1858 and again in 1859, Richard Trench in England published a treatise calling for a British revision of the 1611 Authorized Bible. He warned that the Bible was being revised by “dissenters” (referring to those who were outside of the Church of England) and that the Anglican Church should proceed with their own revision in order to thwart these efforts. He pointed to the translation of

“baptizo” as “immerse,” which, of course, was unacceptable to Anglicans and was looked upon as “sectarian.” He concluded: “However we may be disposed to let the subject alone, it will not let us alone. It has been too effectually stirred ever again to go to sleep; and the difficulties, be they few or many, will have one day to be encountered. The time will come when the inconveniences of remaining where we are will be so manifestly greater than the inconveniences of action, that this last will become inevitable.”

d. The results of modern textual criticism were promoted through commentaries.

(1) “A succession of commentaries, embodying the results of the new Biblical learning and amending the Authorized Version, gradually educated the clergy, and, through them, the laity, in the necessity for some authoritative revision of what was proved to be a faulty translation” (Samuel McComb, *The Making of the English Bible*, 1909, p. 101).

(2) While we don’t share McComb’s enthusiasm for the “new Biblical learning” and we disagree with him that the Old Version was proven faulty, we agree that critical commentaries have wielded vast (destructive) influence. Many of the commentaries criticized the King James Bible, gave alternative readings, and promoted modern textual criticism as a safe “science” without critical analysis.

3. As it was eventually proposed in May 1870 the British Revision project was a masterpiece in ecclesiastical politics. The proposal was deliberately couched in language that would be acceptable both to the majority who wanted only a very slight revision as well as to the minority who wanted a more radical one.

a. Note the actual wording of the proposal: “(1) That it is desirable that a revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures be undertaken. (2) That the revision be so conducted as to comprise both marginal renderings and such emendations as it may be found necessary to insert in the text of the Authorized Version. (3) That in the above resolutions we do not contemplate any new translation of the Bible, or any alteration of the language, except where, in the judgment of the most competent scholars, such change is necessary. (4) That in such necessary changes the style of the language in the existing version be closely followed” (*Comparative New Testament: Old and New Versions Arranged in Parallel Columns*, Preface, Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1881, p. 9).

b. The majority who desired only to see some antiquated language updated and a few obscurities cleared up, would have been comforted by this proposal, inasmuch as it DID NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE and nothing was stated about replacing the Greek Received Text with a new critical text. On the other hand, those who favored the most radical “revision” of the Authorized



Version could also find support in the proposal. Did it not allow for alteration where “IN THE JUDGMENT OF THE MOST COMPETENT SCHOLARS, SUCH CHANGE IS NECESSARY”? Those who considered themselves the most competent scholars, regardless of how radical their judgment, would have felt they had been given *cart blanche* to pursue their goals.

4. The average Christian in England believed that the Revision would be slight.

- a. There can be no doubt that the average Christian of the late nineteenth century would have believed the proposal was calling only for a slight revision--updating of language and perhaps some minor textual changes. We are convinced that was precisely the effect intended by some who were rushing forward with a radical agenda to replace the Received Text under the guise of gentle revision. If the proposal had boldly and honestly called for the replacement of the Received Text with the critical Alexandrian text and for a radical overhaul of the Authorized Version, it would never have won the day.
- b. Consider the testimony of George Samson: “When the revision of the received version of the English Scriptures was proposed in England by the Canterbury Convocation ... *few, if any, outside of the original and controlling majority had the conception that anything more than a revision of the translation of the text generally received in all branches of the Christian Church, Greek and Oriental, Catholic and Protestant, was proposed.* The fact is now made public that some, in the company of revisers selected from the English Church itself, were, from the first, as much surprised as the Christian world at large have been; for the Bishop of St. Andrews, in his late charge to his synod, states, as to his own impressions of the revisers’ work during its progress: ‘*THE MORE I SAW OF THE WORK, THE MORE IT APPEARED TO ME THAT WE WERE GOING BEYOND THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH, AS I UNDERSTOOD IT, WE HAVE BEEN APPOINTED*’” (Samson, *The English Revisers’ Greek Text*, 1882, pp. 9,10).
- c. Consider the testimony of Samuel Hemphill: “... nor can it be too distinctly or too emphatically affirmed that the reluctance of the people could never have been overcome but for the studious moderation and apparently rigid conservation which the advocates of revision were careful to adopt. ... AS TO THE GREAT BULK OF CHRISTIAN ENGLISHMEN, THEY WOULD MUCH RATHER HAVE APPOINTED A COMMITTEE TO REWRITE THEIR SHAKESPEARE THAN THEIR VENERATED AND BELOVED BIBLE” (Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version*, 1906, pp. 25, 26)

5. Charles Ellicott, Chairman of the Revision Committee, had previously spoken against the critical Greek texts.

- a. In the Preface to his book on the *Pastoral Epistles*, published in 1861, Ellicott had said: “It is my honest conviction that for any authoritative Revision, we are not yet mature; either in Biblical learning or Hellenistic scholarship. There is good scholarship in this country ... but it has certainly not yet been sufficiently directed to the study of the New Testament. ... to render any national attempt at Revision either hopeful or lastingly profitable” (p. xiv). This was only nine years before Ellicott joined hands with Westcott and Hort to replace the Greek Received Text with a critical one.
- b. The following interesting testimony appeared in John Burgon’s 1870 *Letter to the Right Rev. Charles John Ellicott in Reply to His Pamphlet in Defence of the Revisers and Their Greek Text of the New Testament*: “A word in your private ear, (by your leave) in passing. You seem to have forgotten that, AT THE TIME WHEN YOU ENTERED ON THE WORK OF REVISION, YOUR OWN ESTIMATE OF THE TEXTS PUT FORTH BY THESE EDITORS WAS THE REVERSE OF FAVOURABLE; I.E. WAS SCARCELY DISTINGUISHABLE FROM THAT OF YOUR PRESENT CORRESPONDENT [Burgon is referring to himself]. ... BUT WITH WHAT CONSISTENCY, MY LORD BISHOP, DO YOU TODAY VAUNT ‘THE PRINCIPLES’ OF THE VERY MEN WHOM YESTERDAY YOU VILIPENDED PRECISELY BECAUSE THEIR ‘PRINCIPLES’ THEN SEEMED TO YOURSELF SO UTTERLY UNSATISFACTORY?” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 378, 379).

6. Even just prior to the start of the Revision work, Ellicott stated that they were not going to pursue a radical revision of the English Bible nor introduce a new critical Greek text.

- a. Consider the following quotes from Ellicott’s speeches and writings prior to the start of the Revision:
  - (1) “We may be satisfied with the attempt to correct plain and clear errors, BUT THERE IT IS OUR DUTY TO STOP” (Charles Ellicott, *Speech in Convocation*, Feb. 1870, p. 83).
  - (2) “Nothing is more satisfactory at the present time than the evident feelings of veneration for our Authorized Version, AND THE VERY GENERALLY-FELT DESIRE FOR AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE” (Ellicott, *Considerations on Revision*, May 23, 1870, p. 99).
  - (3) “We have now, at all events, NO FEAR OF AN OVER-CORRECTED VERSION” (Ellicott May 23, 1870, p. 205).
  - (4) “We should hardly be far wrong IN ESTIMATING THE AMOUNT OF CHANGES that would be introduced in any English revised Version of the

whole 6944 verses of the New Testament, AS NOT EXCEEDING ONE FOR EVERY FIVE VERSES, OR UNDER FOURTEEN HUNDRED IN ALL, very many of these being of wholly unimportant character” (Ellicott, May 23, 1870, p. 52). *COMMENT*: The actual changes made by Ellicott and the revisers numbered 36,000, or four and one-half changes per verse!

(5) “The question will really turn on the amount of and nature of the changes. IF FEW AND GOOD, THEY WILL BE ACCEPTED, if not, they will not meet with acceptance either at home or abroad” (Ellicott, May 23, 1870, p. 199). Thus Ellicott understood the mood of the people very well, that they would accept only “few and good” changes, yet he proceeded to make changes that were MANY and BAD.

(6) “What course would Revisers have us to follow? ... WOULD IT BE WELL FOR THEM TO AGREE ON A CRITICAL GREEK TEXT? TO THIS QUESTION WE VENTURE TO ANSWER VERY UNHESITATINGLY IN THE NEGATIVE. ... we have certainly not yet acquired sufficient critical judgment for any body of Revisers hopefully to undertake such a work as this” (emphasis added) (Ellicott, May 23, 1870, p. 44).

b. Only weeks after making these statements to comfort those who feared a radical revision of the King James Bible, Ellicott allowed Westcott and Hort to introduce their unpublished critical Greek text CLANDESTINELY to his committee! They did this on THE VERY FIRST DAY the committee met. Does anyone really believe Ellicott had not previously known about the Westcott-Hort text? I can’t swallow that. Though we do not know the full details of all of this, and will not this side of eternity, there can be no doubt that there was a great amount of duplicity on the part of many of these men.

7. Just two years prior to the commencement of the Revision, B.F. Westcott himself had stated that it was not time for a Revised Greek text.

- a. Consider the statement, as made in the preface to his *History of the English Bible*: “One question in connexion with the Authorized Version I have purposely neglected. It seemed useless to discuss its Revision. The Revision of the original Texts must precede the Revision of the Translation: and THE TIME FOR THIS, EVEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, HAS NOT YET FULLY COME” (Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, Preface, 1868, p. ix).
- b. Consider the implication of this statement: It can be nothing less than a deception. He states that the time for a revision of the Greek text had not yet come, but in fact he and Hort were well nearing completion of their own revised Greek New Testament. When the translation commenced in 1870, a private edition of this Greek text HAD

ALREADY BEEN PRINTED and was given to each member of the translation committee. Since the final preparation and printing of such a text requires considerable time, we can see that Westcott was not being candid.

8. The English Revision was cloaked in secrecy.

- a. “The English N.T. Revision Company labored for ten long years behind closed doors, ALL WAS SILENT, the general public knew very little about what was going on behind those closed doors. The same rule of secrecy prevailed in the American Company” (George Coy, *The Inside Story of the Anglo American Revised New Testament*)
- b. Westcott and Hort had been working together on their text since 1853. It modified the Greek Received Text underlying the King James Bible in more than 5,700 places. In 1870 Westcott and Hort printed a tentative edition for private distribution only. This they circulated *under pledge of secrecy* within the company of N.T. revisers (George Coy, *The Inside Story of the Anglo American Revised New Testament*)
- c. When the American revision committee was sent copies of the Westcott-Hort Greek N.T. in 1871, it was instructed to keep it strictly confidential and not to make any copies public (John Stoughton, *Our English Bible*).
- d. All of this is in great contrast to the way that the King James Bible was produced. As we have seen, it was an open process.

9. The American Bible Union New Testament was provided to the English Revision translation committee and was consulted at each step. This was revealed by Thomas Armitage, in his *History of the Baptists*. “The Bible Union’s New Testament was published nearly six years before the Canterbury revision was begun, and nearly seventeen years before it was given to the world. Although Dr. Trench had pronounced the ‘installments’ of the American Bible Union’s New Testament ‘not very encouraging,’ yet the greatest care was had to supply the English translators with that version. During the ten and a half years consumed in their work, they met in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster each month for ten months of every year, each meeting lasting four days, each day from eleven o’clock to six; and the Bible Union’s New Testament lay on their table all that time, being most carefully consulted before changes from the common version were agreed upon. One of the best scholars in the corps of English revisers said to the writer: ‘We never make an important change without consulting the Union’s version. Its changes are more numerous than ours, but four out of five changes are in exact harmony with it, and I am mortified to say that the pride of English scholarship will not allow us to give due credit to that superior version for its aid.’ This was before the Canterbury version was completed, but when it was finished it was found that the changes in sense from the common version were more numerous than those of the Union’s version, and that the renderings in that version are verbatim

in hundreds of cases with those of the Union's version.”

10. The Greek text adopted by the English Revision committee was decided by a simple vote.

“The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, as chairman, asks whether ‘any Textual Changes are proposed? The evidence for and against is briefly stated, and the proposal considered. The duty of stating this evidence is by tacit consent devolved upon [sic] two members of the Company, who from their previous studies are specially entitled to speak with authority upon such questions, [Dr. Scrivener and Dr. Hort], and who come prepared to enumerate particularly the authorities on either side. Dr. Scrivener opens up the matter by stating the facts of the case, and by giving his judgment on the bearings of the evidence. Dr. Hort follows, and mentions any additional matters that may call for notice: and, if differing from Dr. Scrivener’s estimate of the weight of the evidence, gives his reasons and states his own view. After discussion, the vote of the Company is taken, and the proposed Reading accepted or rejected. The Text being thus settled, the Chairman asks for proposals on the Rendering” (John Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).

11. The Revision committee was dominated by one man, F.J.A. Hort, who was joined by his cohorts B.F. Westcott and J.B. Lightfoot. They swayed the aforementioned vote toward the critical text.

a. “It can hardly be doubted that Hort’s was the strongest will of the whole Company, and his adroitness in debate was only equaled by his pertinacity” (Samuel Hemphill, *A History of the Revised Version*, 1906).

b. “The textual work of the Revisers was done ... under the inexorable pressure exerted by the personal influence and eager advocacy of the two Cambridge theorists...” (Hemphill).

12. The majority of revisers had no understanding of textual criticism and was in no position to weigh Hort’s recommendations or to make an independent decision on the text.

a. For example, John Burgon quotes the following remark by one of the members of the New Testament translation committee: “Dr. Roberts assures us that ‘Eusebius, Gregory of Nyssa, Victor of Antioch, Severus of Antioch, Jerome, as well as other writers, especially Greeks, testify that these verses were not written by St. Mark, or not found in the best copies.’”

b. Burgon then shows that Roberts had no idea what he was talking about. “Will the learned writer permit us to assure him in return that he is entirely mistaken? He is requested to believe that Gregory of Nyssa says nothing of the sort, and says nothing at all concerning these verses, that Victor of Antioch vouches emphatically for their

genuineness, that Severus’ random expressions of Eusebius, and that Eusebius himself nowhere ‘testifies that these verses were not written by S. Mark.’ So far from it, Eusebius actually quotes the verses, and quotes them as *genuine*. Dr. Roberts is further assured that there are no ‘other writers’, whether Greek or Latin, who insinuate doubt concerning these verses. On the contrary, besides both the Latin and all the Syriac, besides the Gothic and the two Egyptian versions, there exist four authorities of the second century, as many of the third, five of the fifth, four of the sixth, as many of the seventh, together with at least ten of the fourth (contemporaries therefore of codices B and Aleph) which actually recognize the versions in question. Now, when to every known Manuscript but two of bad character, besides every ancient Version, some one and thirty Fathers have been added, 18 of whom must have used copies at least as old as either B or Aleph, Dr. Roberts is assured that an amount of external authority has been accumulated which is simply overwhelming in discussions of this nature” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*).

13. We must also consider the “miserable business” of a Christ-rejecting Unitarian on the committee.

a. Under the influence of Westcott and Hort, Unitarian George Vance Smith was added to the translation committee.

(1) He was pastor of St. Saviour’s Gate Unitarian Chapel in York. Smith was outspoken in his rejection of Jesus Christ as God, claiming that Christ was merely a “humble teacher” and that only after Jesus’ death did he begin to be deified by his followers (G. Vance Smith, *Texts and Margins*, p. 39).

(2) Smith taught that salvation was not purchased by Christ’s blood (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, p. 246).

(3) Smith taught that God’s wrath does not abide on sinners and that they do not have to be redeemed; that all are spiritual sons of God (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, pp. 253, 298).

(4) Smith denied the divine inspiration of the Bible, likening it merely to the “genius of Shakespeare” and claiming that its words are “dead” (Smith, *The Bible and Its Theology*, pp. 269, 276, 277).

[For further documentation of Smith’s heresy see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part III, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because the Modern Texts and Versions Are the Product of End-time Apostasy.” Or see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.]

- b. A communion service was held in Westminster Abbey in July 1870 to commemorate the start of the translation project, and though Smith attended he refused to repeat the Creed, in which the Trinity and the deity of Christ are affirmed.
  - (1) Smith brazenly wrote to *The Times* of London and declared that he had not compromised his principles as a Unitarian by repeating the Creed. This letter was published in the July 11, 1870, edition of the paper.
  - (2) In the ensuing uproar, several thousand Anglican ministers signed a solemn protest and called for the Unitarian to be put off the committee. The Upper House of the Church of England passed a resolution in February 1871 stating, “That it is the judgment of this House that no person who denies the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be invited to join either company to which is committed the revision of the Authorized Version of Holy Scripture ... and that any such person now on either company should cease to act therewith.”
- d. Westcott, Hort, and their close friend J.B. Lightfoot stood by the Unitarian and threatened to resign if Smith left the committee, thus heaping to themselves the judgment of 2 John, that any man who assists a Christ-denying heretic, even bidding him “God speed,” becomes “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 7-11).
- e. Bishop Wilberforce, wisely resigned from the committee, calling the work a “miserable business.” Others who resigned were John Jeff, Christopher Wordsworth, Edward Plumptre, and Charles Merivale.
- f. G. Vance Smith later testified that the textual changes in the English Revised Version and the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament reflected his own heretical theology. Some of the passages listed by Smith as being theologically “superior” in the modern texts and versions as opposed to the King James Bible were Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 3:16; Titus 2:13; and 1 Jn. 5:7, and that is because these passages in the critical text weaken the doctrine of Christ’s deity and thus provide better support for Smith’s heresies. This English Reviser admitted what modern version proponents today such as James White often try to deny, that the critical Greek texts and the modern versions weaken the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ! No man is blinder than he who WILL NOT see.

14. Many of the revisers later criticized their own work!

Charles Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, refused to sign his name to a testimonial of thanks to the Chairman because he was so discouraged by the number of “unnecessary changes made in direct violation of the instructions under which the work was undertaken.”

Richard Trench and George Moberly were so disgusted with the revision that each man had been “anxious at different times to resign.”

William Lee regretted “the number of changes which altered the rhythm of the Authorized Version.”

Charles Merivale, who resigned the committee, said, “We are altogether playing havoc with the old text, in spite of my strong conservative inclination--not influence, I am sorry to say.”

William Humphrey said, “Each of us, times without number, has been outvoted by a ‘tyrant majority.’”

Robert Scott said, “We are impoverishing the English language.”

Benjamin Kennedy said that he “would fain hope [that the Revision] is not unalterably permanent.”

David Brown: “For when THE ITCH OF CHANGE (if I may so speak) TOOK POSSESSION OF THE COMPANY, I was infected by it. But as the work went on, I was one of those who saw that the changes which were being made were not only far too many, but, out of a desire to squeeze out the last shred of the sense, were destroying the purity of the English, and all hope of our version being accepted by the public” (*Memoir of David Brown* by James Brown, p. 222).

THE ITCH FOR CHANGE is an apt description of the field of modern texts and versions from that time to now!

15. The Church of England received the Revision coolly.

- a. The assembly that congregated for the dedication of the Revision concluded, not with a testimony to the glories of the Revision, but to the glories of the Old Bible the Revision was supposed to replace, and with the notice that the Revision “did not supersede that version of the Scriptures which all English-speaking Christians had learnt to esteem and love.”
- b. Thus the Church of England, upon completing its revision of the King James Bible, proclaimed that the revision would not succeed in superseding its predecessor!

16. The English Revised Version of 1885 and the American Standard Version of 1901 caused a great stir and sold many copies when they first appeared, but they were soon laid aside in favor of the King James Bible. Writing 36 years after the publication of the American Standard Version, H.S. Miller wrote: “For more than three centuries the King James’ Version has been the



Bible of the English-speaking world, and THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH ABATEMENT, EVEN IN FAVOR OF THE REVISED VERSION. More copies are being sold each year. Its simple, majestic, Anglo-Saxon tongue, its clear, sparkling style, its directness and force of utterance, have made it the model in language, style, and dignity of some of the choicest writers of the last two centuries. Added to the above characteristics, its reverential and spiritual tone and attitude have made it the idol of the Christian church, for its own words have been regarded as authoritative and binding. It has endeared itself to the hearts and lives of millions of Christians and has molded the characters of the leaders in every walk of life in the greatest nation of the world. During all these centuries, King James' Version has become a vital part of the English-speaking world, socially, morally, religiously, and politically. Launched with the endorsement of the regal and scholarly authority of the seventeenth century, its conquest and rule have been supreme" (H.S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, 1937, pp. 365, 66; Miller quotes part of this paragraph from Ira Price's *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*).

### **The Modernism Associated with the English Revised Version**

In conclusion we will also document the rank modernism that was associated with the English Revised Version. We have already shown that one of the translators was a Unitarian. Following are other examples of the theological modernism that characterized the project. Please understand that this is not the full extent of this sad business.

**William Robertson Smith** (1846-1894), a member of the Old Testament Company of the ERV translation committee

1. He denied the supernatural inspiration of Scripture.

- a. "It was Smith who really popularized Old Testament German criticism. He followed Ritschl in repudiating any supernatural character in the records of revelation as such. ... He gave wholehearted support to the Graf-Wellhausen critico-literary method and conclusion" (H.D. McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860 -1960*, p. 30).
- b. Some of Smith's articles appeared in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* on the subject of the Bible. These were filled with speculation and unbelief. He denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He denied the accuracy of the Masoretic Hebrew Text. He threw "as much uncertainty as possible over the authorship of the Psalms." The fact that this heretic was given a place of honor on the British Bible revision committee speaks volumes about the spiritual destitution of the entire project.

2. Robert Dabney notes that Smith was a deceptive individual, as modernists tend to be ("Refutation of Prof. W. Robertson Smith," *Southern Presbyterian Review*, January 1882). When Smith's first article appeared in the *Britannica* in 1880, the General Assembly of the Free Church brought charges against him. The Assembly, deciding to make a compromise with the

heretic, publicly admonished Smith and received from him a pledge “not again to disturb the faith and peace of the church by such speculations.” What Smith failed to mention in his solemn pledge was this: Another article of like nature was even then at the press in preparation for publication! “It had been in the printer’s hands at the very time he was giving his pledge of good behavior and receiving the generous forgiveness of his judges.”

3. Consequently, Smith was evicted from the professorship at the Free Church Theological College.

**Samuel Rolles Driver** (1846-1914), a member of the Old Testament translation committee

1. Driver was an influential Hebrew scholar (collaborated on the *Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon*), but was modernistic in his approach to the Bible.

- a. The Brown, Briggs, and Driver Hebrew lexicon is founded upon the unbelieving, Christ-denying J.E.D.P. theory of Old Testament interpretation. Both Charles Briggs and Frances Brown, Driver’s co-workers, were modernists.

(1) Briggs was convicted of heresy and dismissed from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. because of a message he preached on January 20, 1891, upon his inauguration to the Edward Robinson Chair of Biblical Theology at Union Seminary. Entitled “The Authority of the Holy Scripture” it was a bold assault upon the Bible. Briggs proposed three “great fountains of divine authority” -- the Bible, the Church, and Human Reason; thus denying that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. He questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and one-Isaiah authorship of Isaiah. He questioned the Bible’s miracles. He claimed that the doctrines of verbal inspiration and inerrancy are two of the “barriers” that hindered a proper approach to the Bible. Another alleged barrier was “minute prediction,” and under this point Briggs attacked Scripture’s predictive prophecy.

(2) Brown, who had been teaching at Union Seminary since 1877, supported Briggs unhesitatingly in his unbelief. In 1908 Brown assumed the presidency of Union, overseeing one of deepest cesspools of unbelief in America.

- b. Driver used his pen to fight against men who defended the historicity and infallibility of Scripture, such as Professor James Robertson of Glasgow (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation: Historical Studies 1860-1960*, p. 120).
- c. In 1911, Driver collaborated with A.F. Kirkpatrick on *The Higher Criticism*, concluding that the Old Testament was the product of natural rather than supernatural forces. In this book Driver “scorns the idea of verbal inspiration and contends that the process of inspiration did not assure freedom from ‘imperfection,

error, and mistake in matters of fact” (McDonald, *Theories of Revelation*, pp. 238, 239).

- d. “The Bible is a ‘library,’ showing how men variously gifted by the Spirit of God cast the truth which they received into many different literary forms, as GENIUS PERMITTED or occasion demanded” (S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 1956, p. ix). *COMMENT*: This is a complete denial that the biblical writers wrote under divine inspiration.
- e. “None of the historians of the Bible claim supernatural enlightenment for the materials of their narrative. ... in many parts of these books we have before us TRADITIONS, in which the original representation has been insensibly MODIFIED, and sometimes (especially in the later books) COLOURED BY THE ASSOCIATIONS OF THE AGE IN WHICH THE AUTHOR RECORDING IT LIVED ... some freedom was used by ancient historians in placing speeches or discourses in the mouths of historical characters” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. x, xi). *COMMENT*: Thus Driver even claimed that the Bible writers doctored historical records.
- f. “[CHRIST] ACCEPTED, AS THE BASIS OF HIS TEACHING, THE OPINIONS RESPECTING THE OLD TESTAMENT CURRENT AROUND HIM: He assumed, in His allusions to it, the premises which His opponents recognised, and which could not have been questioned (even had it been necessary to question them) without raising issues for which the time was not yet ripe, and which, had they been raised, would have interfered seriously with the paramount purpose of His life” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xii). *COMMENT*: Thus, according to Driver, the Lord Jesus Christ, Truth incarnate, stated things that He knew were wrong.
- g. “The consensus of so many acute and able [critical] scholars, of different countries, of different communions, trained independently in different schools, and approaching the subject with different theological and intellectual prepossessions, cannot, as some would have us believe, rest upon illusion” (Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. xvii). *COMMENT*: The deluded Bible scholar thought that the majority opinion in scholarship must be right and ignored the Scripture’s warnings about Satan’s activities and end-time apostasy (e.g., 2 Cor. 11:1-15; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4; 2 Pet. 3; Jude).
- h. “The Book [of Job] cannot be the record of an actual history. ... it is reasonable to suppose that the poet built upon materials handed down to him by tradition, as other dramatists have often done, the Greek tragedians, for instance, and Shakespeare” (Driver, *The Book of Job in the Revised Version*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908, pp. x, xi).

**Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)**

We have already looked at Westcott and Hort in *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part III, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because the Modern Texts and Version Are the Product of End-time Apostasy.” Zane Hodges of Dallas Theological Seminary warned: “The charge of rationalism is easily substantiated for Westcott and Hort and may be demonstrated from direct statements found in their introduction to *The New Testament in the Original Greek*. To begin with, Westcott and Hort are clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures” (Zane C. Hodges, “Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).

The following brief quotes from their writings and biographies should be sufficient evidence of their theological modernism.

“But I am not able to go as far as you in asserting the infallibility of a canonical writing” (Hort writing to Westcott in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, Vol. I, p. 422). [COMMENT: Hort plainly denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture; as we will see, Westcott also rejected this doctrine.]

“For I too ‘must disclaim settling for infallibility.’ In the front of my convictions all I hold is the more I learn, the more I am convinced that fresh doubts come from my own ignorance, and that at present I find the presumption in favor of the absolute truth--I reject the word infallibility--of the Holy Scripture overwhelming” (Westcott writing to Hort in 1860, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. I, p. 207). [COMMENT: This is standard Westcottism. He wants to hold the Bible as absolute truth but not as infallible, which is impossible except to deluded minds such as Westcott’s. His writings often appear to be doctrinally sound but he will redefine terms so that what he seems to say is not what he really means; and he contradicts himself as he does in this exchange with Hort, speaking the truth on the one hand while taking it away on the other. In this, Westcott was a contrast to Hort, who was more forthright about his unbelief.]

“I am glad that you take the same provisional ground as to infallibility that I do” (Hort writing to Lightfoot in 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1, p. 424). [COMMENT: Thus, after corresponding with his friend Lightfoot, another translator of the English Revised Version, on the issue of biblical inspiration, it was Hort’s understanding that Lightfoot held the same heretical view of inspiration that he held.]

“But the book which has most engaged me is Darwin. Whatever may be thought of it, it is a book that one is proud to be contemporary with. ... My feeling is strong

that the theory is unanswerable” (Hort writing on April 3, 1860, *Life of Hort*, Vol. 1). [COMMENT: Darwinianism is a direct assault upon the Scriptures and upon the Gospel (which is predicated upon man’s literal creation, fall, and subsequent need of redemption).]

“No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis give literal history--I could never understand how any one reading them with open eyes could think they did--yet they disclose to us a Gospel. So it is probably elsewhere [in the Bible]” (Westcott, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1890, cited in *Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, Vol. II, p. 69). [COMMENT: Westcott wrote this in his old age. It is obvious that even when he spoke of the Gospel, he was speaking allegorically, because in his view the very foundation of the Bible was not literal history. Like Plato, Westcott held that myth could present spiritual truth. Of course, the denial of the historicity of Genesis 1-3 is a denial of Redemption and of Jesus Christ, who taught a literal Adam and Eve. If there is no literal fall there is no literal salvation, and if the first chapters of Genesis are myth the rest of the Bible is nonsense.]

“... the popular doctrine of substitution is an immoral and material counterfeit. ... Certainly nothing could be more unscriptural than the modern limiting of Christ’s bearing our sins and sufferings to his death; but indeed that is only one aspect of an almost universal heresy” (Hort to Westcott, 1860, cited in *Life of Hort*, Vol. I, p. 430). [COMMENT: What Hort called heresy is, in fact, the truth. The atonement of Christ was made through His literal blood and death, not by His life. We are justified by His blood and reconciled by His death (Rom. 5:9-10). Note that Hort decries a “material” doctrine of the atonement, referring to literal blood and death. The heresy is on Hort’s side, and it is not merely heresy; it is “damnable heresy” (2 Pet. 2:1), meaning that those who hold it cannot be saved.]

[Commenting on John 1:29, 13:31] “... the redemptive efficacy of Christ’s work is to be found in His whole life. ... The redemptive work of Christ essentially was completed [by the time of His discourse in John 13]” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 20, 196). [COMMENT: In fact, the redemption was purchased not by Christ’s life but by His death and blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 9:22). Liberals downgrade the value of Christ’s blood and its necessity for salvation.]

[Commenting on Hebrews 9:12, 14] “I have endeavoured to shew elsewhere that the Scriptural idea of blood is essentially an idea of life and not of death. ... Death again, which makes the blood available, is the seal of the validity of a covenant” (Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1889, p. 293, 261). [COMMENT: Westcott again spiritualizes the atonement, downplaying the blood

and turning it into a mere metaphor for death, which is a gross heresy. It is the same heresy held today by Eugene Nida and Robert Bratcher, both of whom are associated with the United Bible Societies.]

[Commenting on John 1:18 and 14:2] “The ‘bosom of the Father’ [like heaven] is a state and not a place. ... heaven is where God is seen as our Father. We dare not add any local limitation, even in thought, to this final conception” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 15, 200). [COMMENT: Westcott allegorized both heaven and hell. In fact, heaven is nowhere in Scripture described as a state but always as a place (John 14:1). It is called “paradise” (2 Cor. 12:2-4).]

[Commenting on 1 Peter 1:5] “It is hardly necessary to say that this whole local language [“reserved in heaven”] is figurative only...” (Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, p. 37). [COMMENT: Like Westcott, Hort allegorized heaven.]

[Commenting on John 1:1] “Because the Word was personally distinct from ‘God’ and yet essentially ‘God,’ He could make Him known. ... Thus we are led to conceive that the divine nature is essentially in the Son” (Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, pp. 2, 3). [COMMENT: This is a gross heresy pertaining to the deity of Christ. He was not distinct from God nor was He merely “essentially” God. He was fully and completely “God manifest in the flesh.”]

“I believe in the resurrection of the flesh. ... The ‘flesh’ of which we speak as destined to a resurrection is not that material substance which we can see and handle, measured by properties of sense” (Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 136). [COMMENT: Westcott denied the bodily resurrection by redefining terms.]

[Commenting on Acts 9] “For us the appearance to St. Paul would certainly in itself fail to satisfy in some respects the conditions of historic reality--it might have been an internal revelation--but for him it was essentially objective and outward...” (Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, 4th edition 1879, p. 95). [COMMENT: Thus Westcott denies the physical reality of Christ’s resurrection appearances to Paul, questioning its “historic reality” and stating that Paul might have merely seen Christ mystically rather than physically.]

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART VI. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE THE MODERN VERSIONS ARE BUILT UPON A FOUNDATION OF DECEPTION: A LOOK AT THE ENGLISH REVISED VERSION**

1. What was the name of the first prominent English version translated from the Westcott-Hort Greek text?

2. The call for a revision of the King James Bible grew increasingly loud in what century?
3. When we say that theological modernism grew like ivy, what does this mean?
4. What were the four positions toward revision that were revealed in the debate of 1870?
5. John Jeff described his generation as one of “epidemic -----” and “very hasty and not very ----- age.”
6. Henry John Todd called the proposal to revise the King James Bible “dangerous” and warned that the men who were pressing forward with it were “men of the most ----- principles.”
7. When Todd warned that those who were pushing for revision were men who had “converted the Mosaic history into allegory,” what did he mean?
8. When Todd warned that those who were pushing for revision were men who had “converted the New Testament into Socinianism,” what did he mean?
9. What rare combination set Joseph Philpot apart?
10. Philpot praised the King James translators for giving us a version “admirable not only for its -----, but for its -----, -----, and -----.”
11. Philpot warned that the biblical scholars of his day were “notoriously either tainted with ----- or -----.”
12. What four things broke down the resistance to the revision of the King James Bible?
13. According to Ellicott’s own statements in 1903, in what way was the early test revision a deception?
14. What were the two principles of the Bible translation proposed by the American Bible Union?
15. The translators of the American Bible Union version had been influenced by the biblical scholarship of what nation?
16. What role did Bible commentaries have in preparing the way for a revision of the King James Bible?
17. The official proposal for revision in May 1870 was couched in language that would be acceptable to what two diverse groups?
18. True or false? The average Christian in England believed the revision was going to be slight.
19. Samuel Hemphill said, “as to the great bulk of Christian Englishmen, they would much rather have appointed a committee to rewrite their ----- than their venerated and beloved Bible.”
20. Upon what basis did John Burgon reprove Charles Ellicott, the Chairman of the Revision, in 1870?
21. At the beginning of the Revision, Ellicott estimated the amount of changes as not exceeding how many?
22. In reality, how many changes did they make?
23. What clandestine event occurred on the first day of the Revision?
24. Westcott and Hort circulated their Greek New Testament among the translators “under pledge of -----.”
25. How did the English Revision committee determine the Greek text?
26. What man had the strongest will on the Revision committee?
27. Why did the majority of the translators go along with Hort?
28. What was the name of the Unitarian on the Revision committee?

29. What passage warns that if we bid God speed to a false teacher who denies the doctrine of Christ we become “partaker of his evil deeds”?
30. Why did Bishop Wilberforce resign from the translation committee?
31. According to Unitarian G. Vance Smith, the early Christians added “God” to 1 Timothy 3:16 for what alleged reason?
32. Why did Charles Woodsworth refuse to sign his name to a testimonial of thanks to the Chairman of the Revision?
33. Translator David Brown described the spirit that took possession of the company as “the ----  
-- -----.”
34. How was the Revision received by the Church of England?
35. The Revision dedication assembly concluded by glorifying what English translation?
36. Writing 36 years after the publication of the American Standard Version, H.S. Miller glorified what English translation?



## **VII. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP IS UNRELIABLE**

### **Section Summary**

1. Evangelicalism disobeyed the Word of God 50 years ago and today is permeated with a spirit of compromise.
2. In the past 50 years New Evangelicalism has permeated “evangelical” Christianity throughout the world.
3. New Evangelicalism paved the way for acceptance of the modern versions.
4. Evangelical Scholarship cannot be trusted because it has been infiltrated with error. This is especially true in the field of biblical scholarship.
5. Conclusion

Following is a letter from the late evangelical leader James Boice to missionary doctor Thomas Hale of Nepal on the subject of Bible texts and versions. In this letter, Dr. Boice advises Dr. Hale to trust in “CURRENT EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP”:

“There are some in this country and elsewhere who are very zealous for the textus receptus, prepared by the humanistic scholar, Erasmus, and used as the basis for the King James translation. This has led some, quite unwisely in my judgment, to defend the King James Version as the only true and faithful English text. Let me say that the concerns of some of these people are undoubtedly good. They are zealous for the Word of God and very much concerned lest liberal or any other scholarship enter in to pervert it. But unfortunately, the basis on which they are operating is wrong, and I have always tried to do what I could in a gentle way to lead them to appreciate GOOD, CURRENT EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP where the Greek text and the translations are concerned” (Letter from James M. Boice, Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Dr. Thomas Hale, United Mission to Nepal, Kathmandu, September 13, 1985).

Boice’s position is a very popular one: Those who defend the King James Bible and its Greek Received Text are perhaps sincere but certainly misguided people, he alleges, and it is unwise to reject the evangelical scholarship of our day.

Consider some important facts that Dr. Boice left out of his counsel to Dr. Hale:

**1. Evangelicalism disobeyed the Word of God 50 years ago and today is permeated with a spirit of compromise.**

a. To understand evangelicalism today we must go back to the beginning of the 20th century. The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy set the stage for something that called itself the “New Evangelicalism.”

(1) Theological Modernism originated in the 1800s in Europe and spread quickly. It is rationalistic, evolutionary thinking applied to Christianity.

(2) A central tenant of Modernism is a critical approach to the Bible, a rejection of the doctrine of verbal-plenary inspiration. The translators of the Revised Standard Version of 1951 were modernists and their writings illustrate the attack upon the Scriptures:

(a) “Revelation has sometimes been understood to consist in a holy book. ... Even on Christian soil it has sometimes been held that the books of the Bible were practically dictated to the writers through the Holy Spirit. ... I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS IS THE DISTINCTIVELY CHRISTIAN POSITION. ... The true Christian position is the Bible CONTAINS the record of revelation” (Clarence Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity*, 1943, pp. 17, 18).

(b) “The story of Abraham comes down from ancient times; and how much of it is fact and how much of it is LEGEND, no one can positively tell” (Russell Bowie, *Great Men of the Bible*, p. 13).

(c) “The dates and figures found in the first five books of the Bible turn out to be altogether unreliable” (Julius Bewer, *The Literature of the Old Testament*, 1940).

(d) “The narrative of calling down fire from heaven upon the soldiers sent to arrest him is PLAINLY LEGENDARY. . . . What REALLY happened at the Red Sea WE CAN NO LONGER KNOW” (Fleming James, *The Beginnings of Our Religion*).

(e) “We cannot take the Bible as a whole and in every part as stating with divine authority what we must believe and do” (Millar Burrows, *Outline of Biblical Theology*).

(3) Many church leaders in North America fought against theological modernism. These became known as fundamentalists.

(a) George Dollar, in his history of fundamentalism, defines it in this way: “Historic fundamentalism is the literal interpretation of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-biblical affirmations and attitudes” (Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, 1973).

(b) The fundamentalists preached against modernism. The name “fundamentalist” came from a series of books called *The Fundamentals*, which were published from 1910-1915. The books contained 90 articles

written by 64 authors and exposed errors such as theological liberalism and Romanism. They were published by two wealthy businessmen brothers, Milton and Lyman Steward. Some 3 million copies were distributed freely to Christian workers in the U.S. and 21 foreign countries.

- (c) Many fundamentalists separated from denominations that had become infiltrated with modernism. George Dollar divides fundamentalism into two periods. From 1875-1900 conservative leaders raised the banner against modernism within the denominations. From 1900-1935 these struggles resulted in men leaving their denominations to form separate churches and organizations.
- (d) By the turn of the twentieth century, fundamentalism had spread widely and in America it was still synonymous with the term “evangelical.” George Marsden (*Reforming Fundamentalism*) says, “There was not a practical distinction between fundamentalist and evangelical: the words were interchangeable” (p. 48). When the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) was formed in 1942, for example, participants included such fundamentalist leaders as Bob Jones, John R. Rice, Charles Woodbridge, Harry Ironside, and David Otis Fuller.

b. The New Evangelicalism arose as a rejection of separatist fundamentalism.

- (1) The break between New Evangelicalism and fundamentalism began in the late 1940s and was complete by the 1950s.
- (2) The founders of New Evangelicalism grew up in fundamentalist homes and churches. They were the “another generation” (Judges 2:10). They were dissatisfied with the militancy and “negative tone” of fundamentalism. They would not be fighters; they would be diplomats, positive rather than militant, infiltrators rather than separatists. They would not be restricted by a separationist mentality.
- (3) Harold Ockenga claimed to have coined the term “new evangelical” in 1948. Ockenga was pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, founder of the National Association of Evangelicals, co-founder and one-time president of Fuller Seminary, first president of the World Evangelical Fellowship, president of Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, a director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and chairman of the board and one-time editor of *Christianity Today*. He described the origin of New Evangelicalism in the following paragraph from the foreword to Harold Lindsell’s book *The Battle for the Bible*:

“Neo-evangelicalism was born in 1948 in connection with a convocation address which I gave in the Civic Auditorium in Pasadena. While reaffirming the

theological view of fundamentalism, this address repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory. The ringing call for A REPUDIATION OF SEPARATISM and the summons to social involvement received a hearty response from many evangelicals. The name caught on and spokesmen such as Drs. Harold Lindsell, CARL F.H. HENRY, Edward Carnell, and Gleason Archer supported this viewpoint. We had no intention of launching a movement, but FOUND THAT THE EMPHASIS ATTRACTED WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AND EXERCISED GREAT INFLUENCE. Neo-evangelicalism ... DIFFERENT FROM FUNDAMENTALISM IN ITS REPUDIATION OF SEPARATISM AND ITS DETERMINATION TO ENGAGE ITSELF IN THE THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE OF THE DAY. IT HAD A NEW EMPHASIS UPON THE APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL TO THE SOCIOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC AREAS OF LIFE. Neo-evangelicals emphasized the restatement of Christian theology in accordance with the need of the times, the REENGAGEMENT IN THE THEOLOGICAL DEBATE, THE RECAPTURE OF DENOMINATIONAL LEADERSHIP, AND THE REEXAMINATION OF THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE ANTIQUITY OF MAN, THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE FLOOD, GOD'S METHOD OF CREATION, AND OTHERS" (Harold J. Ockenga, Foreword to Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible*).

- (4) Ockenga did not create the movement; he merely labeled and described *the new mood* of positivism and non-militancy that was permeating his generation. Ockenga and the new generation of evangelicals, Billy Graham figuring most prominently, determined to abandon a militant stance. Instead, they would pursue dialogue, intellectualism, and appeasement. They determined to stay within apostate denominations to "change things from within" rather than practice separation. The New Evangelical would dialogue with those who teach error rather than proclaim the Word of God boldly and without compromise. He would meet the proud humanist and the haughty liberal on their own turf with "scholarship" rather than follow the humble path of being counted a fool for Christ's sake by standing humbly and simply upon the Bible. New Evangelical leaders determined to start a "rethinking process" whereby the old paths were to be continually reassessed in light of new goals, methods, and ideology.
- (5) Billy Graham's ecumenical evangelism was the catalyst for the final break between evangelicals and fundamentalists. As he rose to national prominence in the early 1950s, he adopted a policy of inviting all denominations to participate in his evangelistic campaigns. In these campaigns he yoked together publicly with theological modernists and sent his converts back to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches.

c. The heart of New Evangelicalism is its rejection of biblical separation, and this is

primarily what has distinguished New Evangelicals from fundamentalists in the decades since. New Evangelicalism wants to focus on positive truth without attacking error.

- (1) It is thus a movement of compromise and disobedience from its inception, for the Bible plainly demands clear condemnation of false teachers (“mark them” Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; 4:10, 14) and separation from error (i.e., Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 3:5).
- (2) Because New Evangelicalism has refused to separate plainly from error, it has been infected with error. See the plain warnings of 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Galatians 5:9.
- (3) Charles Woodbridge, who was involved with the founding of the National Association of Evangelicals and Fuller Theological Seminary, rejected New Evangelicalism because he understood its compromising character.
  - (a) He described it as a downward spiritual slide: “The New Evangelicalism is a theological and moral compromise of the deadliest sort. It is an insidious attack upon the Word of God. ... The New Evangelicalism advocates **TOLERATION** of error. It is following the downward path of **ACCOMMODATION** to error, **COOPERATION** with error, **CONTAMINATION** by error, and ultimate **CAPITULATION** to error!” (Woodbridge, *The New Evangelicalism*, pp. 9, 15).
  - (b) Note that the downward path does not begin with ecumenical associations or with denying the infallibility of Scripture. It begins with a simple attitude of *toleration* toward error. It begins with the preacher deciding he doesn’t want to do a lot of fighting against false doctrine; he is opposed to false doctrine, but he simply wants to have a more positive emphasis in his ministry.
  - (c) That “little” compromise with the truth; that “little” disobedience toward his preaching commission (e.g., 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Titus 2:11-15; Eph. 5:11) leads to some very large changes as the New Evangelical follows this path to its ultimate conclusion. This downward path is true both for individuals, for churches, and for organizations, associations, and denominations. Each passing decade witnesses more plainly to the truth of Dr. Woodbridge’s observations. Toleration of error leads to accommodation, cooperation, contamination, and ultimate capitulation. This describes the history of New Evangelicalism precisely.

## 2. In the past 50 years New Evangelicalism has permeated “evangelical” Christianity throughout the world.

- a. It has been popularized by influential Christian leaders, such as Billy Graham, Bill

Bright, John Stott, E.V. Hill, Leighton Ford, Luis Palau, Charles Stanley, Bill Hybels, Warren Wiersbe, Chuck Colson, Donald McGavran, Tony Campolo, Arthur Glasser, D. James Kennedy, David Hocking, Charles Swindoll, Tony Maxwell, Tony Evans, and Max Lucado, to name a very few.

- b. It has spread internationally through large parachurch ministries, such as Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth for Christ, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and Back to the Bible.
- c. It has been promoted by influential schools, such as Wheaton College, Fuller Seminary, Gordon-Conwell, Regent College, Westminster Seminary, Moody Bible Institute, BIOLA, and The Evangelical Divinity School.
- d. It has been promoted by large Christian publishers and publications, such as Eerdmans, Zondervan, Moody, Thomas Nelson, and Broadman. *Christianity Today* was founded in 1956 to voice the new philosophy.
- e. It has been promoted by national and international organizations, such as Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, National Association of Evangelicals, Evangelical Alliance of Britain, World Evangelical Fellowship, National Religious Broadcasters, National Sunday School Association, and Promise Keepers
- f. It has been promoted through international conferences, such as the International Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne, Switzerland, July 1974) and the International Conference on Itinerant Evangelists at Amsterdam in 1983, 1986, and 1999.
- g. Today it is no exaggeration to say that almost without exception those who call themselves evangelicals are New Evangelicals; the terms have become synonymous. Ernest Pickering observed: "Part of the current confusion regarding New Evangelicalism stems from the fact that there is now little difference between evangelicalism and New Evangelicalism. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ORIGINAL NEW EVANGELICALISM HAVE BECOME SO UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED BY THOSE WHO REFER TO THEMSELVES AS EVANGELICALS THAT ANY DISTINCTIONS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE YEARS AGO ARE ALL BUT LOST. It is no doubt true to state that 'Ockenga's designation of the new movement as "New or Neo-Evangelical" was abbreviated to "Evangelical." ... Thus today we speak of this branch of conservative Christianity simply as the Evangelical movement"' (Ernest Pickering, *The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 96).
- h. New Evangelicalism is not a denomination or a group; *it is a spirit of partial obedience*, which is blatant disobedience (1 Sam. 15:19-23). *It is a mood of compromise*. It is a subtle rejection of many of the negative aspects of New

Testament Christianity. *It is an attitude of positivism.* It is a tendency toward softness rather than militancy. Many fundamental Baptists are already New Evangelical in philosophy and the number is growing rapidly. Beware, friends. Don't be deceived by the label. Examine the content, and avoid that which is contrary to the Word of God (Prov. 14:15).

### **3. New Evangelicalism paved the way for acceptance of the modern versions.**

It can be demonstrated that New Evangelical compromise paved the way for today's wholesale acceptance of the modern versions.

a. Billy Graham began promoting the modern versions in the early 1950s.

(1) He started by promoting the Revised Standard Version

- (a) New Evangelicalism had only recently arrived on the scene when the RSV was published in 1952.
- (b) Because it was produced by theological liberals and radical ecumenists associated with the National Council of Churches in America and because its translators' liberalism was clearly reflected in its pages (e.g., "young woman" instead of "virgin" in Isaiah 7:14), fundamentalists across the land denounced it. Some also denounced it because of its corrupt Greek text. Men such as Perry Rockwood, Cecil Carter, and Mark Buch denounced it in Canada. The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada passed a resolution condemning it. In the United States it was denounced by Bob Jones, Sr., David Otis Fuller, E.L. Bynum, Harold B. Sightler, James McGinley, Oswald Allis, M.H. Reynolds, Sr., and hundreds of others. *Moody Monthly* and many other publications ran articles denouncing it. In England it was opposed by the Trinitarian Bible Society and others.
- (c) In contrast to this, Billy Graham, New Evangelicalism's foremost popularizer, accepted a copy of the RSV in 1952 and told a crowd of 20,000: "These scholars have probably given us the most nearly perfect translation in English. While there may be room for disagreement in certain areas of the translation, yet this new version should supplement the King James Version and make Bible reading a habit throughout America" (Graham, cited by Perry Rockwood, *God's Inspired Preserved Bible*, nd., p. 15). We should note that Graham was wrong in his prediction of what would happen if the modern versions were accepted. Religious surveys have demonstrated that Bible reading has become LESS OF a habit with each passing decade and with the publication of each new "easy to read" version.
- (d) (c) For a study of the Revised Standard Version and the liberalism of its translators see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.

(2) Graham promoted the Living Bible.

- (a) The Living Bible was first produced in the form of portions of the New Testament that Kenneth Taylor called *The Living Letters*. In 1962 Taylor printed 2,000 copies of his paraphrase of Paul's epistles and attempted to sell them on his own, but he got nowhere. He even rented a booth at a National Religious Broadcasters annual conference, but he sold only 800 copies.
- (b) It was not until Billy Graham took a sudden interest in Taylor's paraphrase that The Living Bible caught on like wildfire. Someone sent a copy of *The Living Letters* to Graham as he was recuperating from an operation in Hawaii, and he was so impressed by them that he printed 50,000 copies to use on his telecasts. That was the beginning of an avalanche of orders. "The Living Bible might be called 'The Billy Graham Bible,' for it was he who made it the success that it is. According to *Time* magazine, July 24, 1972, Billy Graham ordered 50,000 copies of the Epistles, and a short time later ordered some 450,000 more, and still later ordered 600,000 special paperback versions for his autumn television crusade in 1972. From that time on, orders began to pour in" (M.L. Moser, Jr., *The Case Against the Living Bible*, p. 9).
- (c) At Amsterdam '86, Graham invited Living Bibles International to distribute free copies of the Living Bible in 40 different languages to the 8,000 evangelists in attendance (*Light of Life*, India, Sept. 1986, p. 23). On the cover were stamped the words, "Amsterdam '86 - Living Bible Edition - The Holy Bible." The introduction to the Living Bibles distributed in Amsterdam was written by Graham, and he called the frightfully inaccurate paraphrase "this edition of the Scriptures."
- (d) Graham distributed 10,000 copies of the Living Bible to those attending his Mission England Crusade (*Australian Beacon*, No. 241, Aug. 1986).
- (e) In 1987, Graham appeared in television ads for *The Book*, a condensed version of the Living Bible. He said it "reads like a novel." He is right. It reads like a novel because it is not the eternal Word of God.
- (f) (c) For a study of the Living Bible see *The Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

(3) Graham promoted the Today's English Version.

- (a) When the Today's English Version (also called *Good News for Modern Man*) was published in the late 1960s Billy Graham called it "an excellent translation" over nation-wide television from his campaign in Anaheim, California, and it was distributed by the Grason Company of Minneapolis, the distributors of Billy Graham materials (M.L. Moser, Jr., *Good News for Modern Man: The Devil's Masterpiece*, 1970, p. 80).
- (b) Billy Graham's 1988 Christmas card quoted Luke 2:14 from the TEV. It said, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom



he is pleased.” This perversion removes the promise of God’s good will toward men in general. The true Gospel is good news for all sinners, because God offers the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ to all, but the TEV offers peace only to those with whom God is pleased.

(c) For a study of the Today’s English Version see *The Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

(4) In keeping with his love for every new translation and paraphrase to appear since the Revised Standard Version, Billy Graham printed his own edition of Eugene Peterson’s 1993 “The Message: New Testament.”

(a) This paraphrase is so transcendental and just plain weird that it could be called the New Age version (for evidence of this, see <http://www.wayoflife.org/fbns/eugenepeterson-the-message.html>). Consider one example:

Matthew 5:8

KJV “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

THE MESSAGE “You’re blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart, put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.”

(b) For a study of The Message see *The Bible Version Question-Answer Database*, available from Way of Life Literature.

b. Evangelicalism at large has followed Graham’s lead with its non-critical capitulation to the endless stream of modern versions. As New Evangelicalism has gradually leavened the evangelical world over the past fifty years, the modern versions have increased dramatically in popularity. The two go hand in glove.

#### **4. Evangelical Scholarship cannot be trusted because it has been infiltrated with error. This is especially true in the field of biblical scholarship.**

a. The New Evangelicals of the 1950s ignored the warning of God’s Word (Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:33) and repudiated separatism. They sat at the feet of theological modernists through their books and seminaries, even getting theological training in Germany in the very seat of modernism. They associated with modernists in liberal denominations. As a result they were infiltrated with and affected by error.

b. Evangelical leaders have warned of the rapid and frightful spiritual decline of their own movement. Consider some examples of this:

(1) In 1976, Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984) gave a warning at the convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Washington D.C. He spoke on “The

Watershed of the Evangelical World,” which is the infallible inspiration of Holy Scripture. Schaeffer observed: “What is the use of evangelicalism seeming to get larger and larger in number if significant numbers of those under the name of ‘evangelical’ no longer hold to that which makes evangelicalism evangelical?” (D.A. Waite, *What’s Wrong with the N.A.E.* - 1976?).

- (2) That same year Carl F.H. Henry, first editor of *Christianity Today*, lifted his voice to warn of this frightful problem: “A GROWING VANGUARD OF YOUNG GRADUATES OF EVANGELICAL COLLEGES WHO HOLD DOCTORATES FROM NON-EVANGELICAL DIVINITY CENTERS NOW QUESTION OR DISOWN INERRANCY and the doctrine is held less consistently by evangelical faculties. ... Some retain the term and reassure supportive constituencies but nonetheless stretch the term’s meaning” (Carl F.H. Henry, chairman for the 1966 World Congress on Evangelism, “Conflict over Biblical Inerrancy,” *Christianity Today*, May 7, 1976)
- (3) Richard Quebedeaux gave a similar warning that year: “Most people outside the evangelical community itself are totally unaware of the profound changes that have occurred within evangelicalism during the last several years—in the movement’s understanding of the inspiration and authority of Scripture, in its social concerns, cultural attitudes and ecumenical posture, and in the nature of its emerging leadership. ... evangelical theologians have begun looking at the Bible with a scrutiny reflecting THEIR WIDESPREAD ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CRITICISM ... The position—affirming that Scripture is inerrant or infallible in its teaching on matters of faith and conduct but not necessarily in all its assertions concerning history and the cosmos—IS GRADUALLY BECOMING ASCENDANT AMONG THE MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED EVANGELICAL THEOLOGIANs. ... these new trends ... indicate that evangelical theology is becoming more centrist, more open to biblical criticism and more accepting of science and broad cultural analysis. ONE MIGHT EVEN SUGGEST THAT THE NEW GENERATION OF EVANGELICALS IS CLOSER TO BONHOEFFER, BARTH AND BRUNNER THAN TO HODGE AND WARFIELD ON THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE” (Richard Quebedeaux, “The Evangelicals: New Trends and Tensions,” *Christianity and Crisis*, Sept. 20, 1976, pp. 197-202).
- (4) It was also in 1976 that Harold Lindsell (former vice-president and professor of Fuller Theological Seminary and editor emeritus of *Christianity Today*) published the first of two volumes on the downgrade of the Bible in evangelicalism, with particular focus on Fuller Seminary, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The first volume was titled *THE BATTLE FOR THE BIBLE*. Containing careful documentation by a

man who was in the inner circle of evangelicalism's leadership for decades, it leaves no doubt that evangelical biblical scholarship is deeply leavened with apostasy. He wrote: "MORE AND MORE ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS HISTORICALLY COMMITTED TO AN INFALLIBLE SCRIPTURE HAVE BEEN EMBRACING AND PROPAGATING THE VIEW THAT THE BIBLE HAS ERRORS IN IT. This movement away from the historic standpoint has been most noticeable among those often labeled neo-evangelicals. This change of position with respect to the infallibility of the Bible is widespread and has occurred in evangelical denominations, Christian colleges, theological seminaries, publishing houses, and learned societies" (Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, 1976, p. 20).

- (5) In 1977, G. Aiken Taylor warned: "A SURPRISING ARRAY OF EQUALLY DEDICATED EVANGELICALS IS FORMING TO INSIST THAT ACCEPTANCE OF HISTORIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES DOES NOT REQUIRE BELIEF IN AN INERRANT BOOK. ... What has made it a new ball game today is the emergence of A NEW TYPE OF EVANGELICAL. These persons accept the cardinal doctrines of Christianity in their full and literal meaning but AGREE THAT THE HIGHER CRITICS HAVE A POINT: THERE ARE ERRORS IN SCRIPTURE, and some of its precepts must be recognized as being culturally and historically conditioned" (G. Aiken Taylor, "Is God as Good as His Word?" *Christianity Today*, Feb. 4, 1977).
- (6) In his 1978 book, *The Worldly Evangelicals*, Richard Quebedeaux warned that many evangelical scholars are deceitful about their doctrinal heresies: "Prior to the 60s, virtually all the seminaries and colleges associated with the neo-evangelicals and their descendants adhered to the total inerrancy understanding of biblical authority (at least they did not vocally express opposition to it). ... But it is a well-known fact that A LARGE NUMBER, IF NOT MOST, OF THE COLLEGES AND SEMINARIES IN QUESTION NOW HAVE FACULTY WHO NO LONGER BELIEVE IN TOTAL INERRANCY, even in situations where their employers still require them to sign the traditional declaration that the Bible is 'verbally inspired,' 'inerrant,' or 'infallible in the whole and in the part,' or to affirm in other clearly defined words the doctrine of inerrancy that was formulated by the Old Princeton school of theology and passed on to fundamentalism. SOME OF THESE FACULTY INTERPRET THE CRUCIAL CREEDAL CLAUSES IN A MANNER THE ORIGINAL FRAMERS WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED, OTHERS SIMPLY SIGN THE AFFIRMATION WITH TONGUE IN CHEEK" (Quebedeaux, *The Worldly Evangelicals*, p. 30).
- (7) In 1979, Harold Lindsell published the second volume documenting the downgrade of biblical scholarship within evangelicalism. This volume was titled *THE BIBLE IN THE BALANCE*: Lindsell warned: "I must regretfully conclude

that the term evangelical has been so debased that it has lost its usefulness. ... Forty years ago the term evangelical represented those who were theologically orthodox and who held to biblical inerrancy as one of the distinctives. ... WITHIN A DECADE OR SO NEOEVANGELICALISM, THAT STARTED SO WELL AND PROMISED SO MUCH, WAS BEING ASSAULTED FROM WITHIN BY INCREASING SKEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY OR INERRANCY” (Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 1979, p. 319). *COMMENT*: Note that he said that the New Evangelical movement was infiltrated with modernism within 10 years of its founding! This is a loud warning to those fundamental Baptists today who are repudiating separatism and moving in a softer, less militant theological and ecclesiastical direction.

- (8) In 1984, at the very end of his life, well-known evangelical leader Francis Schaeffer published *THE GREAT EVANGELICAL DISASTER*. The book’s title describes the thesis. The cover jacket says, “In this explosive new book Dr. Francis Schaeffer exposes the rise of compromise and accommodation, and the tragic consequences of this, within the evangelical church.” THE ISSUE THAT SCHAEFFER CALLED “THE WATERSHED OF EVANGELICALISM” IS THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE. He testified, “Within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the Bible so that the full authority of Scripture is completely undercut” (*The Great Evangelical Disaster*, p. 44).
- (9) In 1985, Harold Lindsell was even more forceful about the decline of evangelicalism: “Evangelicalism today is in a sad state of disarray. ... It is clear that evangelicalism is now broader and shallower, and is becoming more so. EVANGELICALISM’S CHILDREN ARE IN THE PROCESS OF FORSAKING THE FAITH OF THEIR FATHERS” (*Christian News*, Dec. 2, 1985).
- (10) The October 1985 issue of *Christianity Today* featured a symposium on Bible criticism, and all of the evangelical scholars who participated were committed to modernistic higher criticism. This frightful fact is described by Herman Hanko, professor at the Protestant Reformed Seminary in Grandville, Michigan: “The articles were written by scholars from several evangelical seminaries. NOT ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN THAT SYMPOSIUM IN *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* WAS PREPARED TO REJECT HIGHER CRITICISM. All came to its defense. IT BECAME EVIDENT THAT ALL THE SCHOLARS FROM THE LEADING SEMINARIES IN THIS COUNTRY HELD TO A FORM OF HIGHER CRITICISM. These men claim to believe that the Bible is the Word of God. At the same time, they adopt higher critical methods in the explanation of the Scriptures. This has become so common in evangelical circles that IT IS

ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND AN EVANGELICAL PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS OF OUR LAND AND ABROAD WHO STILL HOLDS UNCOMPROMISINGLY TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE INFALLIBLE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES. The insidious danger is that higher criticism is promoted by those who claim to believe in infallible inspiration” (Herman Hanko, *The Battle for the Bible*, pp. 2, 3). (Hanko’s book should not be confused with Harold Lindsell’s book by that same name.)

(11) In 1993, David F. Wells of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary published *NO PLACE FOR TRUTH: OR WHATEVER HAPPENED TO EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY?* Though Wells is himself a committed New Evangelical he properly identifies evangelicalism’s chief problem as its repudiation of biblical separation and its accommodation with the world: “Fundamentalism always had an air of embattlement about it, of being an island in a sea of unrelenting hostility. Evangelicalism has reacted against this sense of psychological isolation. IT HAS LOWERED THE BARRICADES. IT IS OPEN TO THE WORLD. The great sin of Fundamentalism is to compromise; the great sin in evangelicalism is to be narrow” (emphasis added) (David Wells, *No Place for Truth*, p. 129).

(12) In 1995, Dr. Carl F. Henry was continuing to warn about unbelief within evangelical circles: “Much of the same revolt against truth emerged during the recent theology conference of postliberal speakers sponsored jointly with InterVarsity at Wheaton College. NOT A SINGLE REPRESENTATIVE OF HISTORIC EVANGELICAL ORTHODOXY COMMITTED TO THE UNBROKEN AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE WAS FEATURED...” (*Calvary Contender*, July 1, 1995).

(13) In 1996, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., of the Southern Baptist Convention, warned: “... evangelicalism in the 1990s is an amalgam of diverse and often theologically ill-defined groups, institutions, and traditions. ... THE THEOLOGICAL UNITY THAT ONCE MARKED THE MOVEMENT HAS GIVEN WAY TO A THEOLOGICAL PLURALISM THAT WAS PRECISELY WHAT MANY OF THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN EVANGELICALISM HAD REJECTED IN MAINLINE PROTESTANTISM. ... Evangelicalism is not healthy in conviction or spiritual discipline. Our theological defenses have been let down, and the infusion of revisionist theologies has affected large segments of evangelicalism. Much damage has already been done, but a greater crisis yet threatens” (R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “Evangelical What’s in a Name?” *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, 1996, pp. 32, 33, 36).

c. Following are but a few examples of the rank heresy that has permeated evangelical biblical scholarship.

## CHARLES SCALISE

- (1) Scalise is affiliated with Fuller Theological Seminary. He is associate professor of church history and academic director of Fuller's Seattle campus M.Div. program.
- (2) In his book *From Scripture to Theology: A Canonical Journey into Hermeneutics* (InterVarsity Press, 1996), Scalise argues for the schizophrenic position of accepting the conclusions of biblical criticism while at the same time holding the Bible as the "canonical Word of God."
  - (a) In the first chapter of his book, Scalise plainly and unhesitatingly rejects the "facts-of-revelation" approach to Scripture that accepts the Bible as the historically accurate record of God's infallible revelation (pp. 28-31).
  - (b) Scalise does not believe Moses wrote the Pentateuch under divine inspiration or that the Old Testament record of miracles is accurate. He believes the Pentateuch was written by unknown redactors centuries later (p. 56).
  - (c) He believes the Bible's accounts of miraculous events are exaggerated. For example, he believes that the Egyptian chariots pursuing Israel got "stuck in the mud" (p. 39) rather than being overwhelmed by God's miraculous dividing and undividing of the waters.
  - (d) He agrees with Karl Barth that the book of Numbers contains both "history" and "storylike saga" (p. 49).
  - (e) He believes that to view the Bible as completely historical is dangerous (p. 79).
  - (f) He does not believe the Psalms are historical writings (p. 78).
  - (g) He does not believe that the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Ephesians nor that it was originally addressed to the church at Ephesus, and he does not believe that it matters (p. 58).
  - (h) Scalise wants to allow the Catholic apocryphal books to be accepted as canonical (pp. 60, 61). He commends an approach to biblical canon which has "a firm center and blurred edges" (p. 60).
  - (i) Scalise says, "The Bible is the Word of God because God speaks through it" (p. 22). That is a false, subjective, neo-orthodox view of Scripture. In fact, the Bible is the Word of God because it is the Word of God.
  - (j) He does not like the "negative view of tradition" that comes from the Protestant Reformation, and he believes Protestants and Catholics simply misunderstood one another (p. 73). He believes it is possible to reconcile the differences by requiring that the Bible be interpreted within the context of church tradition (p. 74). In fact, if the Bible must be interpreted by tradition, the tradition becomes the superior authority and you are headed quickly back to Rome.

- (k) In the preface to his book, Scalise notes that he was guided into his critical views of the Bible during studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Tuebingen in Germany.

#### D.A. CARSON

- (1) Carson is a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The February 8, 1999, issue of *Christianity Today* contained an editorial by Michael Maudlin, Managing Editor, entitled “Inside CT.” Maudlin’s editorial boasts that “never before in the twentieth century has the church amassed so many highly skilled, believing scholars to illumine our Scriptures, our theology, our traditions, our church work.” Who are these “believing scholars”? He mentions five of them: Craig Blomberg, BRUCE METZGER, Edwin Yamauchi, Ben Witherington III, and DONALD CARSON.
- (2) Carson gives qualified support to Inclusive Language translation techniques (*The Inclusive Language Debate*, Baker Books, 1998).
  - (a) Carson states that it is fine to change the singular pronouns of John 14:23 to plural. This is what the inclusive language NIVI (New International Version Inclusive, published by Hodder and Stoughton in 1996) does. It reads, “Those who love me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” Carson supports that. Carson defends many such inclusive language perversions.
  - (b) He says it is fine for the NIVI to change “brother” in Matthew 5:22 to “brother or sister.” He says, in fact, that this is “preferable” even though it is not what the Spirit of God said.
  - (c) He supports the NIVI reading in John 11:50 and 1 Corinthians 15:21, which changes “man” to “human being,” even though both passages speak of Christ’s death.
  - (d) He also defends the NIVI translation of Revelation 3:20, which changes the singular pronoun “eat with HIM” to the plural “eat with THEM,” thus destroying the lovely personal aspect of Christ’s promise.
  - (e) He discusses the changes in Psalm 8:4 from “what is man” to “what are mere mortals” and “the son of man” to “human beings.” Even though this destroys a Messianic prophecy, Carson argues, “I am not convinced that those critics are right who say that terrible damage has been done by inclusive-language translations of this passage because they have somehow squeezed Christ to the periphery.”
  - (f) All of this is a gross acquiescence to theological modernism and is a denial of verbal inspiration.
- (3) Carson has adopted Form or Redaction Criticism of the Gospels.

- (a) Carson co-wrote *An Introduction to the New Testament* (1992) with Douglas Moo and Leon Morris. Consider an excerpt: “Moreover, many of the assumptions on which form criticism is based appear to be valid: there was indeed a period of mainly oral transmission of the gospel materials; much of it was probably in small units; there probably was a tendency for this material to take on certain standard forms; and the early church has undoubtedly influenced the way in which this material was handed down. Defined narrowly in this way, there is undoubtedly a place for form criticism in the study of the Gospels” (Carson, Moo, Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, pp. 23, 24). In reality, all of these things are purely speculative and they fly in the face of divine inspiration; but Carson and his fellow evangelical authors give up all of this ground to the liberal form critics. To say that the “early church has undoubtedly influenced the way in which this material was handed down” is a plain rejection of the doctrine of divine inspiration. Either the Gospels were written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit or they were written by natural processes. There can be no middle ground for a believer. The Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and 2 Timothy 3:16 states that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. That settles the matter. Whether or not the authors of the Gospels used some secondary sources is a pointless question. If they did use secondary sources, we will never know what they were. God has not chosen to reveal that to us, so it is a vain debate. All we need to know is what God has plainly told us, that the Holy Spirit gave the Gospels. It is our duty to study those Gospels believingly and preach them to the whole world instead of pursuing the vain path of wasting countless hours trying to ascertain whether there was a document called “Q” or whether Matthew might have borrowed something from Mark or Mark from Matthew, etc.
- (b) Carson claims that in the Gospels we do not have the actual words of Jesus but only a semblance of what Jesus said. “But their failure to preserve the *ipsissima verba Jesu* (the authentic WORDS of Jesus) does not mean that they have tampered with the *ipsisima vox Jesu* (the authentic VOICE of Jesus)” (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, p. 44). This is a denial of verbal inspiration. How can we know that we have the voice of Jesus if we don’t have His actual words? The Lord Jesus said that his “words” would not pass away (Mat. 24:35). Did He make a mistake?

### BRUCE METZGER

- (1) Metzger was also mentioned in *Christianity Today* as one of the “believing scholars” of our day (Michael Maudlin, “Inside CT,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 8,



1999). The book *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: a Selection of Evangelical Voices*, edited by Walter Elwell and J.D. Weaver (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), features a chapter on Bruce Metzger by James A. Brooks (pp. 260-71).

(2) This “believing scholar” and “evangelical voice” holds the following views on the Bible (these are quotes from the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, edited by Bruce Metzger and Herbert May, 1973).

- (a) The Pentateuch is “a matrix of myth, legend, and history” that “took shape over a long period of time” and is “not to be read as history.”
- (b) The worldwide flood of Noah’s day is a mere “tradition” based on “heightened versions of local inundations.”
- (c) The book of Job is an “ancient folktale.”
- (d) The book of Isaiah was written by at least three men.
- (e) The stories of Elijah and Elisha contain “legendary elements.”
- (f) Jonah is a “popular legend.”
- (g) The Gospels gradually took shape after the deaths of the Apostles.
- (h) Peter probably did not write the epistle of 2 Peter (even though the opening verse plainly says that he did).

d. *Christianity Today* calls Bruce Metzger a “believing scholar.” In reality, he is an unbelieving heretic, and the fact that so many evangelicals recommend his writings is clear evidence of the apostasy of evangelical scholarship today. I don’t know of one New Evangelical that has exposed Bruce Metzger’s unbelief. Regardless of what label a man bears, if he denies the infallible inspiration of Scripture he is a heretic (one who makes a self-willed choice of error) and an apostate (one who turns away from the truth) and God’s people should treat him as the dangerous false teacher that he is. The Bible is the foundation for everything in the Christian life and faith, and if the Bible is not infallible, Jesus Christ and the apostles were either deceived or were liars and we are foolish to follow them.

## 5. Conclusion

- a. Evangelical biblical scholarship cannot be trusted today, because it is deeply, frightfully compromised.
- b. It is not surprising that evangelicals do not approach the Bible text version issue by faith and that they have adopted modern textual criticism, dynamic equivalency, form criticism, inclusive language, and other heresies. This is the fruit of the repudiation of separation. In light of the carnal, apostate condition of evangelicalism, it is not surprising that its leaders and institutions cannot see the

truth about Bible versions. Men who think the late Pope was a man of God or that Karl Barth was a sound biblical scholar could not be trusted to give good advice about Bible versions or any other spiritual matter. Men who are unwilling to proclaim Romanism an abomination and speak of it more in soft terms or who hesitate to label the historico-critical views of Scripture as heresy simply cannot be trusted.

- c. Evangelicals believe in a “concept Bible.” The inspired Word of God is not to be found in one place, not in any one text or version today, but it is scattered mystically throughout the conflicting texts and versions. This flies directly in the face of divine inspiration and preservation. Inspiration tells us that there was one and only one settled text of Scripture and preservation tells us that it has been providentially kept pure. Textual criticism, on the other hand, tells us there is an endless possibility of textual readings based on the “manuscript record.” They have such a difficult time making a choice in texts that they assign letters to the readings to signify various levels of uncertainty. An “A” reading is pretty certain (the apparatus says “certain,” but they don’t mean truly certain, as they explain in other places). A “B” reading is less certain and “C” and “D” readings even more uncertain. The apparatus in the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament is filled with “B” and “C” and “D” readings.
- d. Fundamentalists who defend textual criticism are building on a foundation of unbelief and confusion. They are building on New Evangelical scholarship, which in turn is built on modernistic scholarship. On a visit to Bob Jones University’s bookstore in February 2005, I saw at least five books for sale by the liberal Bruce Metzger who believes that the Old Testament is filled with myth, including his book *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, which by its very title denies the divine preservation of Scripture.
- e. The fact that the walls between truth and error are being torn down should not surprise us. Did the Apostles not prophesy of apostasy, spiritual compromise and decline, doctrinal confusion, and religious duplicity?
  - (1) Note passages such as Mat. 7:15-23; 13:33; 24:3-5, 11, 24; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Thes. 2:3-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 3-4; 2 Pet. 2-3; 1 Jn. 2:18-24; 4:1-3; Jude; Rev. 13 and 17. According to the combined testimony of these prophecies, the course of the church age is characterized by deepening religious apostasy and a false unity that will grow throughout the age and will come into full blossom just prior to Christ’s return in power and glory. This is summarized in 2 Tim. 3:13.
  - (2) This is exactly what has happened during the past 1,900 years of church history, yet this present generation has witnessed a tremendous increase in the pace of

the apostasy. Romanism and Paganism are intermingling; Protestantism and Romanism are intermingling; evangelicalism and modernism are intermingling. Theological lines are being blurred and erased.

- f. The pure Gospel and the pure Bible have always been held by the minority, the believing remnant. In light of the prophecies of the New Testament Scriptures that foresee the apostasy of the visible “church,” I do not find it strange that the preserved Bible is rejected today by the majority of those who profess to be Christians.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART VII. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP IS UNRELIABLE**

1. What controversy set the stage for New Evangelicalism?
2. Where did theological modernism arise?
3. What key doctrine does modernism reject?
4. What movement arose in reaction against theological modernism?
5. What series of books spread fundamentalism in the early 20th century?
6. What did fundamentalists do when modernism became ingrained in their denominations?
7. True or false: In the first half of the 20th century fundamentalism and evangelicalism were synonyms.
8. What was the characteristic of the new generation described in Judges 2:10?
9. What was it that the New Evangelicals were dissatisfied with?
10. What man claimed to have coined the term New Evangelical and in what year?
11. What was the catalyst for the final break between evangelicals and fundamentalists?
12. What is the heart of New Evangelicalism?
13. New Evangelicalism wants “to focus on ----- truth without attacking error.”
14. What verse commands us to avoid those who cause division contrary to the doctrine which we have learned?
15. What verse says to turn away from those who have only a form of godliness but deny the power thereof?
16. What passage says to come out from among unbelievers and be separate?
17. What verse says that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?
18. What verse warns that evil communications corrupt good manners?
19. Charles Woodbridge described New Evangelicalism as a five-fold downward path: ----- of error, ----- to error, ----- with error, ----- by error, and ultimate ----- to error.
20. What are some of the ways that New Evangelicalism has spread?
21. True or false: The terms New Evangelical and Evangelical have become synonymous during the past 50 years.
22. New Evangelicalism is a “---- of compromise”; it is “an attitude of -----.”

23. New Evangelicalism is a “rejection of many of the ----- aspects of New Testament Christianity.”
24. What New Evangelical leader has been at the forefront of popularizing the modern versions?
25. What was the first modern version that this man endorsed?
26. What false prediction did this man make about Bible reading if the modern versions should be accepted?
27. Why can evangelical scholarship not be trusted?
28. According to Francis Schaeffer in 1976, what was the watershed of the evangelical world?
29. In 1976 Carl Henry warned that a growing vanguard of graduates of evangelical colleges “now question or disown -----.”
30. What was the title of Harold Lindsell’s 1976 book warning of a downgrade of the doctrine of inspiration among evangelicals?
31. In 1977 G. Aiken Taylor warned about a new type of evangelical that agrees with the higher critics that there are ----- in Scripture.
32. What was the name of Lindsell’s second volume in 1979 warning about a downgrade of the doctrine of inspiration?
33. In this 1979 book, Lindsell warned that within a ----- or so new evangelicalism ... was being assaulted from within by increasing ----- with regard to biblical infallibility or inerrancy.”
34. What was the last book that Francis Schaeffer published before he died?
35. Herman Hanko warned in 1985 that “it is almost impossible to find an evangelical professor in the theological schools of our land and abroad who still holds uncompromisingly to the doctrine of the ----- of the Scriptures.”
36. Fuller Seminary professor Charles Scalise rejects the approach to Scripture that accepts the Bible ----- revelation.
37. Scalise agrees with Karl Barth that the book of Numbers contains “----- sage.”
38. Scalise believes what about the authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians?
39. True or false: D.A. Carson supports changing singular pronouns to plural in John 14:23, Revelation 3:20, and other places.
40. Why is it wrong to say that the assumptions on which form criticism is based are valid?
41. D.A. Carson says that in the Gospels we do not have the *verba* or the very words of Jesus, only the *vox* or the ----- of Jesus.
42. According to Bruce Metzger, the Pentateuch is a matrix of “----, -----, and history.”
43. According to Bruce Metzger, Job is an “ancient -----.”
44. According to Bruce Metzger, Jonah is a “popular -----.”
45. What is a concept Bible?
46. How does the title of Metzger’s book *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, deny the divine preservation of Scripture?
47. According to New Testament prophecy, what spiritual condition can we expect at the end of the church age?
48. How does 2 Timothy 3:13 describe the course of the church age?

# VIII. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE WE REJECT DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY

## Section Summary

1. Introduction: What is dynamic equivalency?
2. The popularity and influence of dynamic equivalency
3. The principles and errors of Dynamic Equivalency
4. Why we reject Dynamic Equivalency
5. Where will Dynamic Equivalency lead?

## Introduction

1. There are two foundational things that are required for a sound Bible translation (not to speak of the qualification of the translator). The first is that it must be translated from the right Hebrew and Greek texts. The second is that it must use the right method of translation.

2. Just as there are competing Greek texts, there are also competing translation methodologies. One is the FORMAL EQUIVALENCY OR LITERAL METHOD, the type that was used to create the Reformation Bibles such as the King James Version in English. The other is the DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY OR “THOUGHT-BY-THOUGHT” METHOD. Modern English Bibles such as the New International Version, the Today’s English Version, The Message, and the Contemporary English Version fail on both counts. They are loose dynamic equivalency renderings of the wrong Greek text. Modern English Bibles such as the New American Standard Bible and the English Standard Version fail on the first count only. They are literal translations of the wrong Greek text!

3. The dynamic equivalency method of Bible translation is relatively new. It was developed a few decades ago and has spread rapidly within translation circles. While working as a foreign missionary in South Asia in the 1980s, I was involved in establishing the principles and guidelines for a Bible translation project and I was in contact with men working on translations in other languages. Through these experiences I became familiar with dynamic equivalency, and the more I have learned of this method and its growing influence, the more alarmed I have become.

4. The new method of Bible translation is called by many names. While some would make a distinction between some of these methods, in a practical sense they are synonyms.

- a. Dynamic Equivalency, meaning the translation does not have to be literally equivalent but only “dynamically” (active, energetic) equivalent.
- b. Common Language, meaning the translator aims to translate the text into the level of

linguistic aptitude common to the receptor language. If the receptor language is a group of people who are largely illiterate, the “common level” might be third or fourth grade.

- c. Idiomatic Translation, meaning the translator is free to change Bible idioms into those that would be easily understood by the people in the receptor language. If they don’t readily understand snow, for example, it can be changed to some other substance that is white in color.
- d. Impact Translation, meaning the translator attempts to produce the same impact on modern readers that, in his opinion, the original language version had on the original readers. The subjectivity of this method is readily apparent.
- e. Indirect Transfer Translation, meaning the translator does not have to translate literally and directly into the receptor language but is free to be indirect.
- f. Functional Equivalency, meaning the translator does not have to aim for exact equivalence but for a more general equivalence.
- g. Thought Translation, meaning the translator is free to translate general thoughts rather than actual words.

## **THE POPULARITY AND INFLUENCE OF DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY**

Some will be surprised to learn that the dynamic equivalency method of Bible translation has gained almost total ascendancy among the world’s most influential translation groups.

### **1. THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES (UBS)**

- a. The United Bible Societies was formed in 1946 and now coordinates the work of most of the world’s Bible societies. The UBS is composed of 142 national and local Bible societies (2004 statistics). In 2003 the member societies of the UBS distributed more than 430 million Bibles, New Testaments, and Scripture portions, including 21.4 million Bibles and 14.4 million New Testaments. They are involved in translation projects in 600 languages.
- b. The UBS has been dedicated to dynamic equivalency since the 1970s. The American Bible Society, which pays a large percentage of the United Bible Societies’ budget, owns the copyright to the Today’s English Version and to the Contemporary English Version. These thoroughgoing dynamic equivalency versions are their babies.

- c. The United Bible Societies are busy producing Today's English Version-like translations throughout the world.
  - (1) In the United Bible Societies publication *Bible Translator*, #23 for 1972, Paul Ellingworth observed, "Since Bible Societies never have enough money for everything, this means that it is unlikely that they will in the future [provide financial] support for translations in 'traditional ecclesiastical language' (p. 223).
  - (2) In August 1987 I received a letter from Geoff Horner of the British and Foreign Bible Society in which he acknowledged that "virtually all translations being carried out at present directly by UBS are CLT's [common language translations]."
  - (3) At its 1996 World Assembly, the United Bible Societies set a goal that by 2010 a dynamic equivalency Bible should be available for every language with more than 500,000 speakers, a dynamic equivalency New Testament for every language with more than 250,000 speakers, and a dynamic equivalency Bible Portion for every language with more than 100,000 speakers.

## 2. LIVING BIBLES INTERNATIONAL

- a. As of 1997, more than 40 million copies of the Living Bible had been sold in the United States and Canada alone.
- b. Its coffers full through the sale of English Living Bibles, Living Bibles International dedicated its vast resources to the production of the equivalent of the Living Bible in non-English languages. By the early 1990s, Living Bibles International had produced the equivalent of the Living Bible in most major languages.
- c. In 1992 Living Bibles International merged with the International Bible Society, copyright holder for the New International Version. This also brought Living Bibles International into direct association with Wycliffe Bible Translators. The International Bible Society's *Light Magazine* reported: "The 1992 merger with Living Bibles International brought together the NIV efforts, the Wycliffe/SIL partnership, and IBS and LBI projects worldwide. Partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators/SIL has helped meet the needs for the world's smaller language groups, and has resulted in the publication of 166 New Testaments and 1283 Scripture publications in 506 languages" (*Light Magazine*, special edition, 1997).

### 3. WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

#### a. How influential is Wycliffe?

- (1) As of the end of 2002, Wycliffe was involved in some 1,500 translation projects in 70 countries.
- (2) Through the Summer Institute of Linguistics training school in Texas and the various programs associated with it in other parts of the world, Wycliffe is responsible for much of the training of professional Bible translators from other groups, including those with the United Bible Societies, those with denominational translation projects, even some fundamentalists.
- (3) In addition to the influence of its school, Wycliffe people have written training materials used broadly by professional translators.

#### b. Wycliffe is entirely committed to dynamic equivalency

- (1) John Beekman and John Callow of Wycliffe have authored materials which present classical dynamic equivalency methods.
- (2) The guru of dynamic equivalency, Eugene Nida, started his ministry with Wycliffe. Today he is with the United Bible Societies, with whom Wycliffe works closely.
- (3) Wycliffe promotes dynamic equivalency through the Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- (4) Even through their computer programs, Wycliffe promotes dynamic equivalency. A few years ago I ordered one of their computerized publishing programs, and it came with the Today's English Version as the sample text.
- (5) Consider the following testimony about Wycliffe's involvement with dynamic equivalency: "By their study of linguistic principles the Wycliffe Bible Translators have added a fresh dimension to Bible translation. ... Two American scholars, who began their work in the 1930s with the Wycliffe Bible Translators, have reached a high rank in international linguistic scholarship. Kenneth Pike has continued to work with the Wycliffe Bible Translators; Eugene Nida, who shaped the translation policies of the American Bible Society in the post-war years, is today the leader in the translation field for the United Bible Societies. This new approach to Bible translation has resulted in much greater freedom for the translator. *The Good News Bible* (American Bible Society, 1976) is typical of the new style. ... The meaning of the original is carefully analyzed, then the



result is reconstructed in the receptor language, according to the principles of that language” (W.F. Wootton, “Translating the Bible,” *The History of Christianity*, Lions Publishing: Herts, England, 1977, pp. 630, 631).

c. For a study on Wycliffe Bible Translators see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.

4. IN ENGLISH, popular dynamic equivalency versions include the New International Version, the Today’s English Version, the Living Bible, the New Living Bible, the Simple English Bible, the Contemporary English Version, and The Message.

## **THE PRINCIPLES OF DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY**

### **1. Dynamic equivalency aims to translate thoughts rather than words.**

- a. Eugene Nida said, “... words are merely vehicles for ideas” (Nida, *Bible Translation*, 1947, p. 12).
- b. Kenneth Taylor said: “We take THE ORIGINAL THOUGHT and convert it into the language of today. ... We can be much more accurate than the verbal translation” (Interview with J.L. Fear, *Evangelism Today*, December 1972). Living Bibles International’s news publication was called *THOUGHT FOR THOUGHT*.
- c. Consider this description of the Contemporary English Version: “The Contemporary English Version differs from other translations in that it is not a word-for-word and sequence-by-sequence rendering which reproduces the syntax of the original texts,” explained Dr. Burke. “Instead, it is an IDEA-BY-IDEA TRANSLATION, arranging the Bible’s text in ways understandable to today’s reader of English” (American Bible Society *Record*, June-July 1991, pp. 3-6).

### **2. Dynamic equivalency aims at the use of simple language and style throughout.**

- a. Consider the New Punjabi Bible produced by the Bible Society of India. “From the language point of view, IT SHOULD NOT HAVE A VERY HIGH LITERARY STANDARD. The language used should be within the reach of both the highly educated as well as the less educated people” (*The North India Churchman*, The Church of North India, June 1985, p. 10).
- b. Consider the Bengali Common Language Bible produced by the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE). “Since the literacy rate in Bangladesh was only twenty-one percent when we began the translation, and since that figure included many people who are barely literate and many new readers, WE FELT THAT OUR LANGUAGE LEVEL WOULD HAVE TO BE THAT WHICH IS

READILY UNDERSTOOD BY ADULTS WHO HAVE STUDIED IN GRADE FOUR OR FIVE. This level would be understandable to illiterate people hearing it read as well as to people who are able to read but have limited education” (Lynn A. Silvernale, *By the Word*, pp. 25,26).

- c. The Dutch Living Bible was aimed at the level of AN EIGHT- TO TWELVE-YEAR -OLD CHILD and was tested by school groups.

### **3. Dynamic equivalency aims to make the Bible entirely understandable to non-Christians.**

For example, the translation principles of the New Punjabi Bible included this one: “It should be such that readers other than Christians also could understand without any difficulty” (*The North India Churchman*, June 1985, p. 10).

### **4. Dynamic equivalency avoids traditional ecclesiastical terms.**

- a. Consider the New Punjabi Bible: “In this translation the traditional language should be avoided” (*The North India Churchman*, June 1985, p. 10).
- b. The Today’s English Version deleted such “churchy” terms as “justification,” “sanctification,” “saint,” “redemption,” “propitiation,” “elder,” “deacon” and “bishop” and replaced them with terms that even the unsaved can understand.
- c. The Contemporary English Version does the same thing. Grace is changed to “kindness,” bishop and deacon are changed to “church officials” and “church officers,” saint is changed to “God’s people,” righteous is changed to “acceptable,” justified is changed to “freely accepted,” etc.
- d. Consider some examples from *Bible Translations for Popular Use* by William L. Wonderly. This book was published by the United Bible Societies and is a standard work on dynamic equivalency methods.
  - (1) In John 1:14 “full of grace and truth” becomes “full of love and truth” in the Spanish CL version. (Do we have to point out that love is not the same as grace?)
  - (2) The “grace did much more abound” of Rom. 5:20 becomes “the kindness of God was very much greater” in the Spanish CL version. (Again, “grace” means more than the “kindness of God.”)
  - (3) In Romans 1:5, “By whom we have received grace and apostleship” becomes “God has given us the privilege of being sent” in the Spanish CL version. (This “translation” is so different from the original that it is almost unrecognizable, but

this is typical of dynamic equivalency versions.)

- (4) In 2 Corinthians 8:6, “this same grace also” becomes “this kind offering” in the Spanish CL version.
- (5) In Galatians 2:9, “perceived the grace that was given unto me” becomes “recognized that God had given me this special task” in the TEV.
- (6) In Acts 13:39, “by him all that believe are justified from all things” becomes “by means of him that all those who believe are forgiven of all” in the Spanish CL version. (The term “justified” means much more than “being forgiven.”)

## **5. Dynamic equivalency adapts the translation to the culture of the receptor people.**

- a. Eugene Nida developed this principle. In describing Nida’s dynamic equivalency theories, Jakob Van Bruggen observes the emphasis on adapting the message of the Scriptures to the culture of the people: “According to the advocates of dynamic equivalence, real communication is broken when the difference between biblical and modern culture is not considered. Nida writes, ‘Similarly, in the biblical account, the holy kiss, the wearing of veils, women speaking in the church, and wrestling with an angel all have different meanings than in our own culture’ (E. Nida, *Message and Missions*, p. 41). ... He considers the cultural pattern so dominant that the translation should never be a mere transmitter of the words of the message. There is no formal equivalence between the original message and the translated message. What is needed is not a static equivalency but a dynamic equivalency” (Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson, 1978, p. 70).
- b. Examples of this principle in translation work:
  - (1) The example of *snow*. This example was related to me by the head of the Bible Society in Nepal in the 1980s. He told me about one of the United Bible Societies projects in a part of the world in which the people had not seen snow. The translators decided to translate Isaiah 1:18—“...though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as the inside of a coconut...” Is the inside of a coconut the same as snow? Both are white, but there the similarity stops. Snow is like God’s forgiveness not only in that it is white but also in the way it covers and in its loveliness and purity and probably in many other aspects. Even slight changes in God’s Word can have significant consequences in loss of meaning or even in imparting the wrong meaning.
  - (2) In a United Bible Societies translation in the Ulithian language of the South Pacific, “dove” was changed to a local bird called a gigi (“Mog Mog and the Fig Tree,” *Record*, Nov. 1987, pp. 6-7). Who is to say that a gigi is a proper

replacement for dove in Scripture?

- (3) “foxes” was translated “coyotes” in the Mazahua language of Mexico in Mat. 8:20 (*Translating the Word of God* by John Beekman and John Callow)
- (4) “on a candlestick” was translated “on a grain bin” in the Korku language of India in Mark 4:21 (*Translating the Word of God* by John Beekman and John Callow)
- (5) Ross Hodsdon of Bibles International, formerly with Wycliffe, told me that in a translation for Eskimos in Alaska, “lamb” was replaced with “seal pup.”
- (6) In a translation in the Makusi language of Brazil, “son of man” was replaced with “older brother” (Ross Hodsdon).
- (7) In another Wycliffe translation “fig tree” was replaced with “banana tree” (Ross Hodsdon).
- (8) The J.B. Phillips translation, commended by Eugene Nida, changes “holy kiss” (Rom. 16:16) to “a hearty handshake all round.”

**6. Dynamic equivalency assumes that the Bible was written in language easily understood by the people then living.**

a. A statement of this principle

- (1) “The naturalness of the translation and the ease with which it is understood should be comparable to the naturalness of the original and to the ease with which the recipients of the original documents understood them” (Beekman and Callow, *Translating the Word of God*, p. 34).
- (2) “The spiritual truth of Scripture was originally written in clear natural language which was intelligible to its readers. Its language conformed to the idiomatic usage of the native speakers of the time in which it was written. However, the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit was necessary to enable the original readers to grasp that spiritual truth, because spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. When people today read a translation of the Bible, the only barrier they should have to encounter is the spiritual one, not a linguistic one which stems from the use of unnatural and difficult language” (Lynn Silvernale, *By the Word*, pp. 36, 37).

b. The refutation of this principle

- (1) Even the writers of the Bible themselves did not always understand what they

were speaking! This is stated in 1 Peter 1:10-11.

- (2) The Apostle Peter acknowledged that some of the writings of Paul were “hard to be understood” (2 Pet. 3:16).
- (3) Even the widely held supposition that Jesus spoke in parables to make his teachings simple and clear for unbelievers is not true. The parables of the Lord Jesus Christ had a two-fold purpose—to reveal truth to believers and to hide truth from unbelievers. “Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.... Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matt. 13:10-13).
- (4) It is not true that all of the idioms of the original writings were those of the native speakers at the time of writing.
  - (a) The Law of Moses, with its tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices, was given by revelation from God on Mt. Sinai and was foreign even to the Israelites at the time of its reception. These were “patterns of things in heaven” (Heb. 9:23). The details relating to the Law, the priesthood, and the tabernacle and its service were not adapted to Israel’s culture; Israel’s culture was molded and created by that Revelation!
  - (b) The teaching about the church in the New Testament is described as “a mystery,” which means new revelation from heaven (Col. 1:26). The people of the first century knew no more about propitiation, justification, sanctification, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, or any other church doctrine and service than people of the world do today. They had to learn the meaning of these foreign, heavenly things from the Divine Revelation after they were saved, just as men do now.
  - (c) Even common words used by the apostles under inspiration of the Holy Spirit are often given new meanings when they are used in Scripture than they had in everyday life.
- (5) The Bible has great variety of style and doctrine—some simple enough for children to understand, some difficult even for the most educated adult; some simple enough for the unsaved to grasp, some difficult even for the most mature saint. First year Greek students learn that there is great variety in linguistic style within the New Testament. Many first year Greek students can translate portions of the Gospel of John with considerable accuracy, while to the same students Paul’s epistles remain obscure because of the greater difficulty in style and content.

- (6) Man is not free to simplify that which God has not simplified! The Bible is God's Book. Does any fallen man know better than God what man needs to hear?
- (7) Contrast the thinking of Bible translators today with that of faithful William Tyndale of old, who first translated the English Bible from Greek and Hebrew: "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, to give a reckoning of our doings, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would this day, if all that is in the earth, whether it be pleasure, honour, or riches, might be given me."

## WHY WE REJECT DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY

### 1. Dynamic equivalency was created by a false teacher.

#### a. Who is he?

- (1) The chief proponent of dynamic equivalency is Eugene Nida. "... if you read a Bible translated in the last half-century, you probably read a Bible influenced by Nida" (Ray Van Leeuwen, "We Really Do Need Another Bible Translation," *Christianity Today*, Oct. 22, 2001, p. 29).
- (2) Nida was the Executive Secretary of the Translations Department of the American Bible Society from 1946 to 1980. Since his retirement, he has been retained as a Special Consultant for Translations. He traveled to more than 85 countries and conferred on translation work in more than 200 different languages. He has influenced countless Bible translators through his writings.
- (3) In 1947 Nida published the groundbreaking book *Bible Translating: An Analysis of Principles and Procedures, with Special Reference to Aboriginal Languages* (London: United Bible Societies). Since then has published many other influential books promoting dynamic equivalency, such as the following:

*Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954)

*God's Word in Man's Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952)

*Message and Mission: The Communication of the Christian Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960)

*Religion across Cultures: A Study in the Communication of the Christian Faith* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979)

Nida with William Reyerburn -- *Meaning Across Cultures: a Study on Bible Translating* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, c. 1981)

Nida with Charles Taber -- *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Published for the United Bible Societies by E.J. Brill, 1974)

Nida with Jan de Waard -- *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1986)

c. What does he believe?

(1) Eugene Nida has a heretical view of Bible inspiration.

- (a) Nida believes the Scriptures were “imperfect” and that God’s revelation was not “absolute truth,” even in the originals (Nida, *Message and Mission*, 1960 pp. 221-222, 224-228).
- (b) He says that the words of Scripture “are in a sense nothing in and of themselves” (Nida, *Message and Mission*, p. 225).
- (c) He denies that the Scriptures were written “in a kind of Holy Ghost language” (Nida, *Language Structure and Translation*, 1975, p. 259).
- (d) He claims that the Bible is limited and relative (Nida, *Customs and Cultures*, 1954, p. 282, f. 22).

(2) Nida has a heretical view of Christ’s atonement.

- (a) Nida agrees with the modernists who claim that Christ’s blood was not an actual offering for sin but merely a “figure of the cost” (Nida, *Theory and Practice*, 1969, p. 53, n. 19).
- (b) Nida claims that Christ’s blood was merely symbolic of “violent death” and that it was not a propitiatory offering to God for sin (Nida and Newman, *A Translator’s Handbook on Paul’s Letter to Romans*, on Rom. 3:25).
- (c) Nida has worked closely with Robert Bratcher, who changed the word “blood” to “death” in the Today’s English Version. The Spirit of God teaches us that death alone was not sufficient to save us from our sins; the shedding of blood was necessary (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). Romans 5:9-10 teaches us that it was *both* the death and the blood of Christ that saves us from our sins. We are justified by his blood and reconciled by his death.

c. Why should we avoid Nida’s theories? God has given clear commands about our relationship with heresy. See, for example, Rom. 16:17; Titus 3:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:16-21; and 2 Tim. 3:5.

## **2. Dynamic equivalency denies the nature of the Bible.**

a. The nature of the Bible described

(1) *The Bible is Revelation from heaven*. See Gal. 1:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:21. Examples:

Moses (Num. 16:28), David (2 Sam. 23:2), Nehemiah (Neh. 9:30), and the Prophets (Jer. 1:9; 30:2; 36:2; Ezek. 1:3; Acts 3:21).

(2) *The Bible is verbally inspired.* See 1 Cor. 2:12-13; Matt. 5:18; Acts 1:16. The writers of the Bible were not given general ideas and then left to their own devices in phrasing them. The words and forms by which the message was communicated were settled in heaven from all eternity, purified seven times (Psalm 12:6; 119:89).

(3) *The Bible contains the deep things of God* (1 Cor. 2:10). Bible language is sufficient to communicate eternal and divine Truth and there is no reason therefore to change it in order to make it more effective.

b. How do these truths apply to Bible translation? “When the Bible is being translated, its own doctrine as to its verbal inspiration imposes limitations on the translator’s function. The Scripture teaches us that, as God’s word written, its form as well as its thought is inspired. The translator of Scripture has, therefore, above all else, to *follow the text: it is not his business to interpret it or to explain it*” (Ian Murray, “Which Version? A Continuing Debate,” *The New Testament Student and Bible Translation*, ed. John H. Skilton, 1978, p. 132).

### **3. Dynamic equivalency ignores God’s warnings about adding to or taking away from God’s Word.**

This warning is repeated in the law (Deut. 4:2), in the poetical books (Prov. 30:5-6), in the prophets (Jer. 26:2), and at the end of the Bible (Rev. 22:18-19).

### **4. Dynamic equivalency robs men of God’s words.**

This, in my estimation, is the most serious matter pertaining to this issue.

a. Consider the following Scriptures which show the importance of each word of the Bible: Deut. 8:3; Mat. 4:4; Lk. 4:4; Gal. 3:16; Jn. 10:35.

b. Dynamic equivalency leaves the readers without access to the very words of God, leaving only general thoughts at best. The reader of a dynamic equivalency version cannot meditate over each word and detail of Scripture because he does not have an exact translation.

(1) Dynamic equivalency removes “theological terminology,” changes concrete images into abstractions, removes and interprets images and figures of speech, adds explanatory material, changes the verbs, shortens the sentences, etc.



- (2) Consider, for example, the Bible's ambiguity, meaning phrases and expressions that can have more than one meaning. Dynamic equivalency commonly interprets these so that the reader is limited to one meaning.
- (a) The Bible speaks of "the gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mk. 1:1). At the very least, that can mean that the gospel is *from* Jesus Christ, that the gospel *belongs to* Jesus Christ, and that the gospel is *about* Jesus Christ. Dynamic equivalencies such as the NIV and the TEV and the NLT change this by giving it one possible interpretation -- "the gospel about Jesus Christ" -- and then replacing the broad original with the translator's narrow interpretation.
  - (b) The Lord Jesus promised blessing for those who are "poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3). This expression has a wealth of meaning. It refers to humility, a recognition and acceptance of one's sinfulness and unworthiness, complete dependence upon God, and more. The dynamic equivalency weakens this by choosing one narrow meaning and replacing God's Word with the translator's interpretation. The NLT reads, "God blesses those who realize their need for him." The CEV chooses another narrow meaning, "God blesses those who depend only on him." *The Message* weakens it even further with, "you're blessed when you're at the end of your rope." It should be obvious that a person can be at the "end of his rope" without depending on God or without acknowledging his true spiritual destitution, etc.
  - (c) The term "Lord of hosts" is rich with meaning. It describes God as the Lord of multitudes, referring to His power, His sovereignty, His royalty, His greatness, His wealth, His knowledge, His zeal against His enemies, and many other things. The NIV changes this to "Lord Almighty" which does not hold all of the same meaning.
  - (d) The author of Song of Solomon compares his beloved's eyes to "doves' eyes" (Song of Solomon 4:1). This metaphor is rich with meaning. Doves are beautiful, gentle, peaceful, soft; they come in pairs; they flutter their wings as a woman flutters her eyelashes, etc. The NLT chooses only one of these meanings, that of softness, and replaces the original with that one limited interpretation -- "your eyes are soft like doves." The TEV does away with the metaphor and replaces it with a different meaning altogether: "how your eyes shine with love."
- c. This becomes even more frightful when we consider that the dynamic equivalency versions being produced by the United Bible Societies and others are oftentimes intended to REPLACE the old literal versions and that in many cases dynamic equivalencies are being translated into languages that have never had a literal version and for which there are no plans.
- d. Many of those who use dynamic equivalency think they are helping people by

bringing the Word of God down to their level. Actually they are thieves who are dooming the people never to have the very words of God. Consider this warning: “Readers of an English Bible should not be at the mercy of a translation committee’s interpretation of a passage. They have a right to make up their own minds regarding what a passage means. Furthermore, a translation should preserve the full exegetical potential of the original text. ... Dynamic equivalent Bibles repeatedly give us a one-dimensional Bible in places where the original is multidimensional. The result is a loss of the richness of meaning that the original embodies and an organized movement that keeps ... readers from what the original actually says” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, 2002, pp. 194, 195, 209).

## **5. Dynamic equivalency confuses spiritual enlightenment with natural understanding**

- a. Consider the following Scriptures which teach that man is unable to understand the Word of God apart from divine assistance: 1 Cor. 2:14-16; John 16:8-13; Matt. 13:9-16; Luke 24:44-45; Acts 16:14; Prov. 1:23.
- b. Dynamic equivalency fails to recognize the root problem in regard to man’s inability to understand the Scriptures, which is spiritual blindness and not cultural ignorance or lack of education.
- c. We see an example of this in Acts 13:44-48. Here the Jews, in whose cultural setting the Bible was written, rejected the Scriptures, while the idolatrous Gentiles accepted it. Culture and language were not the problem; rebellion of the heart was the problem. This remains true today.

## **6. Dynamic equivalency confuses translation with evangelism and teaching.**

- a. The translator’s job is to faithfully transmit the words and message from the original into the receptor language as literally as possible. The translator is not free to simplify that which God has not simplified. Utter faithfulness to the original text should be the very chiefest concern of the Bible translator.
- b. It is, then, the job of the evangelist and teacher to explain that message to the people. The Bible translator whose overriding goal is to make the Bible clear to the unsaved even if that means changing and simplifying it, of necessity becomes a Bible corrupter.
- c. Consider the example of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. The eunuch was reading from the Scriptures and could not understand it. It was Philip the evangelist’s job to explain the Scriptures to this man (Acts 8:26-33). If Philip had believed the theories

of dynamic equivalency he might have returned home after this experience and rewritten and simplified the book of Isaiah, which the Ethiopian eunuch had been reading! Was it not obvious that the sincere but unsaved Ethiopian had not been able to understand the Bible? Was it not obvious that many other men must be in the same condition as this Ethiopian? Was it not obvious that there are not enough evangelists to speak personally to and explain the Bible for every lost person? Well, then, we must re-word the Bible and change its difficult, antiquated words (the book of Isaiah was about 800 years old when the eunuch was reading it) so that the non-Christian can pick it up and “understand it without difficulty.” Certainly this would please God. Such is the thinking so commonly held among those who are promoting dynamic equivalency. Philip and the early Christian leaders would have had their hands cut off rather than to have tampered with God’s holy words. That Book is Holy! God has exalted His Word even above that of His high and holy name (Psa. 138:2)! If God’s name is holy and reverend, and God has magnified His Word above all His name, then His Word is even holier and more reverend than His name! Amazing, but true. Woe unto those who are tampering with this unspeakably Holy Book.

## **7. Dynamic equivalency brings the Bible down to the people’s level instead of raising the people up to the Bible.**

- a. Dynamic equivalency condemns the people to permanent weakness, because they will never rise higher than the level of the Bible that they use. Instead of translating the Bible so that it sounds like a fifth-grade reader or the morning newspaper, we need to translate it accurately and majestically, and then educate the people so that they can understand it. The goal of sound Bible translation is to produce a Bible that will raise the people up.

“Instead of lowering the Bible to a lowest common denominator, why should we not educate people to rise to the level required to experience the Bible in its full richness and exaltation? Instead of expecting the least from Bible readers, we should expect the most from them. The greatness of the Bible requires the best, not the least. ... The most difficult of modern English translations -- the King James -- is used most by segments of our society that are relatively uneducated as defined by formal education. ... research has shown repeatedly that people are capable of rising to surprising and even amazing abilities to read and master a subject that is important to them. ... if modern readers are less adept at theology than they can and should be, it is the task of the church to educate them, not to give them Bible translations that will permanently deprive them of the theological content that is really present in the Bible” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 107, 109).

- b. God has ordained that the Bible be studied and that apart from diligent study it cannot be understood properly (2 Tim. 2:15; Prov. 2:1-5; 1 Tim. 4:15-16).

- c. We accomplish this education process by producing Bible study tools, such as dictionaries, commentaries, and concordances. There is nothing new about this. This is what missionaries have been doing for centuries. It is a process that still works very well, and I speak from experience as a church planter in a pagan culture.
- d. Shouldn't the Bible be simplified for evangelism?
  - (1) The Bible as a whole was not written for the unsaved. It is the Bible's gospel that was written for the unsaved (Rom. 1:16), and we can make the gospel as simple as necessary for the lost (through personal evangelism, tracts, gospel recordings, radio broadcasts, etc.) without bringing the Bible itself down to their level.
  - (2) To translate the Bible so that the unsaved can understand it without help is an absolute impossibility, anyway, because they cannot understand it until they are born again. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

## **8. Dynamic equivalency confuses inspiration with translation.**

- a. The dynamic equivalency theory says the translator should ask, "How would Moses or Paul write if they lived today?" Beekman and Callow develop this philosophy in *Translating the Word of God*: "The original writings were both natural in structure and meaningful in content. When we say that the Scriptures are natural in form, we are simply saying that, written as they were by native speakers, they fell within the bounds of natural Hebrew, Aramaic, or Koine Greek. The use of words and their combinations; the syntax; the morphology—all was natural. This characteristic of the original should also be found in a translation" (Beekman and Callow, *Translating the Word of God*, p. 40).
- b. This thinking is faulty. It confuses inspiration and authorship with translation. An author has the authority to write whatever he pleases. In the case of the Bible, the Author was God and the secretaries were the various human writers. The human writers of the Bible received the words through the process of inspiration. The translator is not an author nor is a translator receiving Scripture by the process of divine inspiration; he is merely translating something into another language. The Bible translator's job is to translate exactly what God has written. His job is not to adapt the images of the Bible to a modern culture.
- c. Not only does the translator not have the authority to modify the Scriptures, he has no way of knowing how the Bible writers would speak if they lived today. The very idea that we could perform such a task is fiction.

“The biblical writers are not writing today. They wrote millennia ago. To picture them as writing in an era when they did not write IS TO ENGAGE IN FICTION, and it distorts the facts of the situation. ... We do not want a speculative Bible. We need a Bible based on certainty. What is certain is *what the biblical writers did actually say and write*” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 98, 99).

## **9. Dynamic equivalency attempts the impossible.**

- a. For one thing, dynamic equivalency attempts to retain the exact meaning of the original while allowing for great changes in adapting the Bible message to the language and culture of the receptor people.
  - (1) Consider the following statement by United Bible Societies translator Thomas Headland: “The goal in Bible translation is to make a translation that will communicate to the target culture without their having to learn the Judeo-Greek culture, while at the same time being faithful to the uniqueness of the historical and theological setting of the Scriptures. No simple task!” (Thomas N. Headland, “Some Communication Problems in Translation,” *Notes on Translation*, No. 88, April 1982, p. 28).
  - (2) In fact, this is an impossible task. God chose to reveal His Word within the framework of a Judeo-Greek culture, and if the Bible is changed so that modern readers can understand it without learning anything about that culture, it has been corrupted.
- b. Second, according to dynamic equivalency, translators today can know how hearers of the Bible centuries ago were impressed. One of the goals of dynamic equivalency is to reproduce the same reaction in modern hearers. Thus it is called impact translating.
  - (1) We cannot possibly know how men centuries ago were impressed by the Word of God spoken to them. Where would we find such information?
  - (2) Further, there have always been different reactions to that same Word by the different hearers. A glimpse of this is seen in Acts 17, following Paul’s message to the Athenians. All heard the same message from God that day, yet some mocked, some put off a decision until a later date, and some believed (Acts 17:32-33).
  - (3) The Bible translator’s job is not to attempt to create a certain reaction in the hearer of the Bible, but to concentrate upon making a faithful rendering of God’s Holy eternal Words. When the translation is completed and the preaching begins,

men will respond in the various ways they have always responded to God's Word—some mocking, some ignoring and putting it off, some believing.

**10. Dynamic equivalency is based on half-truths. Consider some of these:**

a. First, dynamic equivalency says an overly literal translation is not correct.

- (1) This is true as far as it goes. Those who promote dynamic equivalency inevitably begin by giving examples of wildly improper translations and using these as justification for their paraphrasing. Eugene Nida does this in *Every Man in His Own Language*: “Literal translations—the easiest and the most dangerous—are the source of many mistakes. ... literally the story of Mary ‘sitting at the feet of Jesus,’ only to discover later that what they had said really described Mary as ‘on Jesus’ lap’” (Eugene A. Nida, *God's Word in Man's Language*, Harper and Brothers, 1952, p. 17).
- (2) This is a straw man to draw attention away from the improper liberties dynamic equivalency proponents take with the Word of God. The solution to a woodenly literal translation is not dynamic equivalency, but a reasonable, spiritual translation that seeks to be true to the original words and form and that does not take the frightful liberties of dynamic equivalency, but is willing to let the Word of God say what it says rather than change it—even for the sake of simplification. The proper Bible translation methodology has been called an “essentially literal translation” and “formal equivalence”\* as opposed to dynamic equivalence. When we call for a literal translation as opposed to dynamic equivalency, we are not calling for a wooden word-for-word interlinear. [\* We understand that there is danger in borrowing this terminology because it carries the heretical baggage of the modern dynamic equivalency philosophy. We agree with David W. Norris when he says: “The term ‘equivalence’ of any kind with respect to Bible translation is entirely inappropriate. Following structuralist views of language, it suggests that the translation is something similar but not quite the same. A merely equivalent meaning, formal or dynamic, is not an identical one. It accommodates the notion that the reproduction of the thoughts of one person in the mind of another in another language through translation is not a credible purpose. ... Something that is an equivalent is not the same as its counterpart, therefore even the term ‘formal equivalency’ should not, strictly speaking, be applied to the Authorised Version. In accepting this distinction, we legitimise Nida's methodology” (Norris, *The Big Picture: The Authority and Integrity of the Authentic Word of God*, pp. 373-74).]

b. Second, dynamic equivalency says the translator must be an interpreter.

- (1) This is true as far as it goes. An example is Isaiah 7:14 where it is arguably

possible to translate the Hebrew word “almah” either as “young woman” or as “virgin.” The Christ-honoring, Bible-believing translator will always choose *virgin* because he knows that the verse is a Messianic prophecy of Christ’s virgin birth. This is the result of interpretation.

- (2) All translators face this, but the fact that a translator must interpret things in Scripture does not justify the extreme liberties that are being taken in dynamic equivalency versions.
  - (3) Furthermore, there is a vast difference between interpreting *words* and interpreting *passages*. Consider the following from Leland Ryken, professor of English at Wheaton College: “Whenever a translator decides that a given English word best captures the meaning of a word in the original text, the decision implies an interpretation. But THERE IS A CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *LINGUISTIC* INTERPRETATION (DECISIONS REGARDING WHAT ENGLISH WORDS BEST EXPRESS HEBREW OR GREEK WORDS) AND *THEMATIC* INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF A TEXT. Failure to distinguish between these two types of interpretation has led to both confusion and license in translation. ... It is time to call a moratorium on the misleading and ultimately false claim that all translation is interpretation. For essentially literal translations, translation is translation, and its task is to express what the original *says*. Only for dynamic equivalent translations is all translation potentially interpretation--something added to the original or changed from the original to produce what *the translators think the passage means*” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation*, 2002, pp. 85, 89).
- c. Third, dynamic equivalency says that translator must keep in mind the people for whom the translation is made.
- (1) This is true; every translator must have the people in mind for which he is translating.
  - (2) This does not mean, though, that we can change *fig tree* to banana tree or *blood* to death or *grace* to kindness or *saints* to people of God or *pastors* to church officials!
- d. Fourth, dynamic equivalency says some things implicit must be made explicit.
- (1) This is true. Sometimes words must be added in the translation, for instance, to make a passage intelligible and/or to bring out words implicit in the original. An example of this is the words that appear in italics in the King James Version. These are words that were the translators considered necessary to complete the

meaning of the Hebrew and Greek in English but that are not explicitly in the original text. This type of thing is essential in Bible translation work and is something that has always been done.

- (2) Dynamic equivalency perverts this principle and stretches it beyond godly bounds.

Isaiah 53:1

KJV—"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

TEV—"The people reply, 'Who would have believed what we report? Who could have seen the Lord's hand in this?'"

The things added and changed in this passage illustrate that dynamic equivalency goes beyond any proper bounds of faithful translating. Upon what authority have the TEV translators added "the people reply" to this passage? Upon what authority have they changed the tenses of the verbs? Upon what authority have they changed "arm of the Lord" to "the Lord's hand"? None of these changes are implicit in Hebrew and none of them are necessary to give a correct meaning in English.

Ephesians 3:2-4

KJV—"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

CEV—"You have surely heard about God's kindness in choosing me to help you. In fact, this letter tells you a little about how God has shown me his mysterious ways. As you read the letter, you will also find out how well I really do understand the mystery about Christ."

Note the great liberties taken by dynamic equivalency translators that go beyond any proper bounds of Bible translation. "If you have heard" is changed to "you have surely heard." "Grace" is changed to "God's kindness." The important phrase "by revelation he made known unto me" is changed to the weak "God has shown me." "Mystery" is changed to "mysterious way," which had an entirely different meaning. Many words are added by the translators, such as "this letter" and "the letter." These are only a few of the changes made by the translators with no authority from the Greek text.

## **11. Dynamic equivalency is an improper answer to very real problems.**

- a. Consider the problem of making the Bible understood by illiterate people. Promoters



of dynamic equivalency use examples from translation work in undeveloped nations among illiterate people to justify their methodology. Hear missionary translator Lynn Silvernale: “How do you talk about sheep to people who have never seen sheep and have no word for such an animal? What do you use for ‘wine’ in a language which has words only for ‘grape juice’ and ‘strong liquor’? How to express theological terms and concepts like ‘righteousness,’ ‘justification,’ ‘propitiation,’ is another big challenge for most translators. In many tribal languages these concepts are foreign and there are no ready-made terms to express them. It has taken some translators months and years to find a suitable term in their language for such abstract ideas as ‘love’ and ‘holiness.’ To get an idea of what is involved, try expressing ‘propitiation’ in the shortest, clearest possible way for a translator to put into a language which doesn’t have such a term” (Silvernale, *By the Word*).

b. The proper answer is two-fold:

- (1) First, it is never right to change the Word of God. Who has given such permission? The Divine Author says, “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6). I have more than a sneaking suspicion that this is the last word on the subject!
- (2) The proper solution to the problem of making the Bible understood by illiterate people is to translate the Bible accurately, then explain the translation with footnotes, dictionaries, and commentaries, and educate the people through literacy programs and Bible teaching.

c. What if a language is just so primitive that the Scripture cannot be translated accurately in it? In light of God’s warning about tampering with His Word, I would suggest that the proper approach to such a situation would be the following:

- (1) First, simple portions of Scripture can be translated and used for evangelism.
- (2) As the number of converts grows within a language group, other portions of Scriptures can be translated and used to teach the new Christians about the things of God.
- (3) An accurate translation of the Scriptures in a local trade language can often be used to train key tribal leaders who in turn can teach their own people and further the growth process.
- (4) By this means, over a period of time, the language of a group can be developed so that eventually it might be able to carry the entire Word of God.

d. This is the process that occurred in the English language.

- (1) First there were portions of the Bible translated into Anglo-Saxon, in the earliest days of the formation of the English language. It is thought that Bede (672-735) translated the Gospel of John and that King Alfred (848-901) translated some of the Psalms.
- (2) The entire Bible was translated into English in the late 14th century by John Wycliffe and his co-laborers, but it was from Latin and was not the mature English Bible that would come later. The English language was still in formation.
- (3) The English Bible was finally translated from Greek and Hebrew by William Tyndale in the early 16th century.
- (4) The Tyndale Bible was revised by a committee of some 50 Anglican scholars in the early 17th century. By this time the English language was at its zenith as far as beauty and power.
- (5) Thus it took almost 800 years for the Bible to be perfected in English. During that period, the English language itself was being perfected and matured from its roots in Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and French.

e. This is the method that has been used successfully through the centuries by faithful missionaries who would never have used dynamic equivalency. The Bible should raise the people heavenward, not the other way around. Dynamic equivalency is a backward, upside down way of thinking.

f. The Bible does not say that the Scriptures must be translated into every language. It says the Gospel is to be preached to all people (Mk. 16:15). While the Gospel can be translated into every tongue, the same is not necessarily true for the whole Bible.

g. Many make light of the idea of using a trade language to teach people the things of God. They talk of the necessity of using the “heart language.” They say a trade language can never reach the heart. I think that is wrong. Those who understand a language, even though it might not be their mother tongue, can understand the truths of God’s Word from that language. Of course, it’s always nicer to hear something in one’s own mother tongue. That’s all well and good. But I say, if necessary, that it would be better to educate an entire group of people in a trade language so they can have the uncorrupted Word of God rather than corrupt the Word of God through dynamic equivalency.

**12. Dynamic equivalency has no firm controls on the translation process, because allows the translator to take so many liberties with the words and form of Scripture.**

- a. Consider the following example from the first part of 1 Thessalonians 1:3. We will give the translation from the faithful KJV and two other literal translations (the New American Standard Version and the English Standard Version) and then from three dynamic equivalency versions (New Living Bible, Today's English Version, Contemporary English Version). We will see that the literal translations agree word for word, since there is no textual issue in this passage; but the dynamic equivalencies are dramatically different, not only from the literal versions but also from one another.

KJV "... your work of faith, and labour of love..."

NASV "... your work of faith and labor of love..."

ESV "... your work of faith and labor of love..."

NLB "... your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love..."

TEV "... how you put your faith into practice, how your love made you work so hard..."

CEV "... your faith and loving work..."

- b. The observation by Leland Ryken, professor of English at Wheaton College, confirms this problem: "The sheer range of variability in the dynamic equivalent translations of this verse shows that ONCE FIDELITY TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE ORIGINAL IS ABANDONED, THERE ARE NO FIRM CONTROLS ON INTERPRETATION. The result is a destabilized text. Faced with the range of dynamic equivalent translations, how can a reader have confidence in an English translation of this verse? And if it is possible to translate more accurately by abandoning the words of the original for its ideas, why do the dynamic equivalent translations end up in such disagreement with each other? Instead of enhancing accuracy, dynamic equivalence subverts our confidence in the accuracy of the translation" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, 2002, p. 82).

**WHERE WILL DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY LEAD?**

It would be wise to consider just where things are headed now that the method of dynamic equivalency has gained such ascendancy.

**1. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, no more accurate Bibles will be produced. There will only be the loose, undependable paraphrases.** This is already occurring throughout the world.

- a. The United Bible Societies and the Wycliffe Bible Society are almost exclusively producing dynamic equivalencies.

(1) “Translations in colloquial language [dynamic equivalency] have the greatest priority. Their total costs are paid and this payment has priority. At the bottom of the list are the translations in traditional church language; no new funds may be formed for these, unless these funds are fed by special campaigns. See the ‘Table of Priorities,’ *Bible Translator* 23 (1972): p. 220. Paul Ellingworth wrote in the same issue (p. 223): ‘Since Bible Societies never have enough money for everything, this means that it IS UNLIKELY THAT THEY WILL IN THE FUTURE SUPPORT FOR TRANSLATIONS IN ‘TRADITIONAL ECCLESIASTICAL LANGUAGE’” (Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible*, p. 67).

(2) This is a situation that has existed for quite a few years. In August 1987 I received a letter from Geoff Horner of the British and Foreign Bible Society, acknowledging that “virtually all translations being carried out at present directly by the United Bible Societies are CLT’s [common language translations].”

(3) The same mindset exists in Wycliffe Bible Translators. To my knowledge, ALL of their translations are dynamic equivalency versions. The world is being filled with “Bibles” that are weak paraphrases at best.

- b. The United Bible Societies are aggressively pushing to replace the literal (“formal equivalence”) versions with their new dynamic equivalence (“common language”) versions. This is openly admitted, at least in their more technical publications. An article appeared in *The Bible Distributor*, Number 27, October-November 1986, entitled “Promoting a Common Language Translation” by Daniel C. Arichea, UBS Translation Consultant for the Asia Pacific region, and M.K. Sembiring, Information Officer of the Indonesian Bible Society. Give close attention to their report:

How does a Bible Society promote a common language (c.l.)—also called dynamic equivalence (d.e.)—translation? WHAT ARE THE WAYS TO OVERCOME THE RESISTANCE OF CHURCH PEOPLE, both leaders and members alike, to d.e. translations?

In 1985, the Indonesian Bible Society embarked on a program to promote the c.l. Indonesian Bible which came off the press in May of that year. Several months before that, the IBS staff started to consider a viable program TO ENSURE THAT THIS NEW TRANSLATION WOULD BE USED BY CHURCHES ALL OVER THE INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGO. In the planning sessions for this promotional program, the following matters came into focus:

Most Indonesian Christians are very fond of the standard translation of 1974, which is a formal correspondence (f.c.) translation, similar in nature to the English Revised Standard Version. THE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS TRANSLATION OFTEN RESULTS IN A RATHER SUSPICIOUS AND NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD ANY OTHER TRANSLATION. ...

One basic approach that was employed was to promote the c.l. translation, not in lieu of, but in addition to the standard translation that is already loved and used, IN ORDER TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE FOR IT.

The tendency of translation people is to speak very highly of d.e. translations sometimes to the extent of implicitly ridiculing f.c. translations. THERE IS, OF COURSE, JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH ENTHUSIASM. THE IDEA OF DYNAMIC OR FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE TRANSLATIONS IS LIKE THE BIBLICAL PEARL OF GREAT PRICE: ONCE A PERSON FINDS OUT HOW VALUABLE IT IS, THAT PERSON TENDS TO LEAVE ALL OTHER TRANSLATIONS IN FAVOR OF THE NEWLY FOUND TREASURE. But such an approach creates problems for people who are already used to other translations. Many people get the idea that the translations that they cherish will no longer be published and, because of that, they begin to resist the new translation even before reading it.

IN VIEW OF THIS, WE DECIDED ON A NEW APPROACH: WE PROMOTED BOTH TYPES OF TRANSLATION. Both f.c. translations and d.e. translations are valid translations. The problem is not that one is better than the other, but that it is not often recognized that they are translated on the basis of different translation principles. ... Both translations are valid and both strive to be faithful to the biblical text. [DWC: In our estimation, this is not true.] But whereas the f.c. translation retains the various biblical forms and terms, the d.e. translation renders these terms in the light of their context; furthermore, it uses language that expresses the meaning of the biblical text as naturally as possible and on a level which is appropriate for the intended readership.

THIS APPROACH OF PROMOTING BOTH TRANSLATIONS HAS BROKEN DOWN RESISTANCE TO THE NEW C.L. TRANSLATION. MANY NOW READ IT TOGETHER WITH THE F.C. TRANSLATION. QUITE A FEW HAVE COMPLETELY SWITCHED TO THE C.L. TRANSLATION, ESPECIALLY AFTER REALIZING THAT IT IS MUCH EASIER TO READ AND UNDERSTAND (Daniel Arichea and M.K. Sembiring, "Promoting a Common Language Translation," *The Bible Distributor*, Number 27, October-November 1986).

From this report of how the common language version is being promoted in Indonesia, the plan and methodology of the United Bible Societies becomes clear. Their goal is to replace the older literal versions with the dynamic equivalence paraphrases. They liken this new method of translation to the "pearl of great price" and acknowledge that translators are leaving the literal method "in favor of the newly found treasure." But they also realize that many Christians still love the older,

literal versions and tend to be skeptical of the new common language versions. Therefore, to “overcome the resistance of church people to dynamic equivalency translations” they plot various approaches whereby over a period of time the people’s resistance toward the new paraphrases is cleverly broken down. At first they uphold *both* the old and new versions as valid and good, but the actual goal is to *replace* the formal versions. Thus the authors of the above report proclaim with much enthusiasm, “This approach of promoting both translations has broken down resistance to the new c.l. translation. Many now read it together with the f.c. translation. Quite a few HAVE COMPLETELY SWITCHED to the c.l. translation.”

## **2. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, no more majestic Bibles will be produced.**

Dynamic equivalency cannot produce a truly majestic translation because it takes too many liberties with the Word of God; in fact, dynamic equivalency disdains the majesty and grandeur of the Bible and willfully lowers that most exalted, most noble of books to the level of a lowly newspaper, which has so little value that it is read today and tossed away tomorrow.

### **a. Consider why the Bible should be translated in a majestic manner:**

- (1) The Bible should be majestic because it is the living Word of God. The Bible is more than a collection of words that must be translated. It is the majestic Word of the Living God. Of all of the books of the world, only the Bible is authored by God. Thus a good translation of the Bible will be minutely accurate but it will be more than that; it will be majestic. It will not read like a newspaper or a novel or a political speech, because it is none of those; it is the eternal Word of God!
- (2) The Bible should be majestic because the original Hebrew and Greek is majestic and dignified, and when the Scripture is translated accurately and literally by spiritually and literarily qualified people, its inherent majesty will shine through the translation.

### **b. Statements about the necessity of majesty in Bible translation by men of literature:**

- (1) “What is lost as we move down the continuum from the exalted to the colloquial? The first thing that is lost is THE DIGNITY OF THE WORD OF GOD. If we scale down the stateliness and, where appropriate, the eloquence of the Bible into a flat, prosaic format, the Bible ceases to be anything special. A critic of modern colloquial translations has rightly said that this ‘kind of familiarity, too, can breed contempt.’ ... A second effect of the diminishment of language is the loss of the effective power of which the King James Bible was once the very touchstone. A reviewer of a modern translation comments on a quoted passage with the statement, ‘Almost everything has been lost [from the KJV]: not only the rhythm, but the sense of authority that goes with it--that

bracing sense that we aren't appealing to ideas or vague hopes of our own but to firm promises and facts. It has become weak'" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 205, 206; Ryken is professor of English at Wheaton College).

- (2) "GOOD RHYTHM for a Bible is like a qualifying exam: If a translation cannot measure up on this matter, it is not in the running to be a superior Bible for public use and oral reading in more private situations. ... The best test of rhythm is simply to read passages aloud. ... If in oral reading a passage ebbs and flows smoothly, avoids abrupt stops between words and phrases where possible, and provides a sense of continuity, it is rhythmically excellent. If a translation clutters the flow of language and is consistently staccato in effect, it is rhythmically inferior. ... All of these considerations make rhythm an essential translation issue, not a peripheral one. For a book that is read aloud as often as the Bible is, and for a book whose utterances are so frequently charged with strong feeling and sublime ideas, excellent rhythm should be regarded as a given" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 257, 259).
- (3) "To make the Bible readable in the modern sense means to FLATTEN OUT, TONE DOWN and convert into tepid expository prose what in K.J.V. is wild, full of awe, poetic, and passionate. It means stepping down the voltage of K.J.V. so it won't blow any fuses" (Dwight Macdonald, "The Bible in Modern Undress," in *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*, ed. D.G. Kehl, 1970, p. 40; cited by Ryken).
- (4) "We are in real danger of losing, in an age of flat prose, an essential and invaluable capacity of the language, fully realized once in the English Bible ... the capacity to express by tone and overtone, by rhythm, and by beauty and force of vocabulary, the religious, the spiritual, the ethical cravings of man" (Henry Canby, "A Sermon on Style," in *Literary Style of the Old Bible and the New*, ed. D.G. Kehl, 1970, p. 427; cited by Ryken).
- (5) "Tone is the literary term that refers to such things as the writer's attitude toward his or her subject matter, the suitability of style for the content, and the correctness of effect on a reader. ... From time to time I encounter the sentiment from dynamic equivalency advocates that the Bible 'should not sound like the Bible.' Billy Graham endorsed *The Living Letters* by saying that 'it is thrilling to read the Word ... [in] a style that reads much like today's newspaper.' I disagree with these verdicts. A SACRED BOOK SHOULD SOUND LIKE A SACRED BOOK, NOT LIKE THE DAILY NEWSPAPER. It should command attention and respect, and to do so it cannot be expressed in the idiom of the truck stop. The failure of modern colloquial translations is frequently a failure of tone" (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, pp. 278, 279, 280).

(6) “What a literary scholar said of one modern translation is generally true of all dynamic equivalent and colloquial translations: it ‘does slip more smoothly into the modern ear, but it also slides out more easily; the very strangeness and antique ceremony of the old forms make them linger in the mind.’ It is not only the proliferation of translations that has made Bible memorization difficult, if not actually a lost cause. ... These translations are inherently deficient in the qualities that make for memorability” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 284).

(7) “I believe the Christian Church has a profound responsibility towards a people’s language ... Far from canonizing, or exploiting, the flaccid, vague language of our time, the Bible should be constantly showing it up, directing an arc-light upon it, cauterizing its impurities” (Martin Jarrett-Kerr, “Old Wine: New Bottles,” in *The New English Bible Reviewed*, p. 128; cited by Ryken).

### **3. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, there will no longer be confidence in the Bible as the literal Word of God.**

- a. There will be no confidence because the dynamic equivalencies are at conflict with one another and there is no settled standard. We have already given examples of this.
- b. There will be no confidence because of the multiplicity of translations. The dynamic equivalency method of translation requires that the Bible be continually re-translated because the language is continually changing at the common, everyday level. The “language of today” is ever new so a Bible that purports to be in the “language of today” must be ever new. A multiplicity of Bibles creates confusion because the individual is confronted with a bewildering variety of versions, all claiming to be better than the others. Can all of these Bibles really be the Word of God? “The effect [of the proliferation of Bible translations] has been to destabilize the biblical text--to render it ever-changing instead of permanent. With this succession of new translations (and their constant revision), people have lost confidence in the reliability of English translations. If every year brings a new translation, apparently the existing ones must not be good enough. And if the previous ones were inadequate, what reason is there to believe that the current ones will be better?” (Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 187).

### **4. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, the standard of public Bible reading is lowered and there is increasing biblical illiteracy.**

The dynamic equivalency method is supposed to increase biblical literacy by bringing the Bible down to the people’s level. In fact, the opposite is true. The level of biblical literacy has steadily declined in churches and societies where dynamic equivalency prevails. “Finally, after a quarter



century of easy-read Bible translations designed to make the Bible accessible to the masses, biblical illiteracy continues to spiral. Instead of solving the problem, modern translations, with their assumption of a theologically inept readership, may have become a self-fulfilling prophecy” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 110).

#### **5. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, the practice of Bible memorization decreases.**

- a. “We have lost a common Bible for English-speaking Christians. The Christian community no longer speaks a universal biblical ‘language.’ And with the loss of a common Bible we have lost ease in memorization of the Bible. After all, when a common Bible exists, people hear it over and over and ‘memorize’ it virtually without consciously doing so, but this ease is lost when translations multiply. Furthermore, with the proliferation of translations, churches and organizations find it difficult to know which translation to choose for purposes of memorization; and even after they choose, there is such variety that a person faces the prospect of having to memorize from different translations in different settings” (Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, p. 62).
- b. In August 2003, I visited Saddleback Community Church in southern California, pastored by Rick Warren of *Purpose Drive Church* fame. On the way into the auditorium I observed that only a few of the people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them paraphrases such as the Living Bible, the New Living Bible, The Message, the Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would have been impossible to have followed along in one’s Bible, regardless of which one you brought. *The result is that a large number of the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching.* Bible memorization in such a context is minimal.

#### **6. Where dynamic equivalency prevails, the fear of God is diminished.**

- a. When the Bible reads like a newspaper or even a comic book, its solemnity and awesomeness and holiness is greatly diminished. As a result man’s fear of God is diminished.
- b. The fruit of this is “rock and roll Christianity,” with its flippancy toward the holy things of God; its emphasis upon entertainment; its shallowness; its preference for ecumenism over strong biblical doctrine; its worldliness. The fear of God’s judgment is greatly diminished among professing Christians today, and I am convinced that the modern Bible versions lie at the heart of this. The more the loose dynamic equivalency versions are preferred, the more shallow and worldly the Christianity becomes.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS PART VIII. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE WE REJECT DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY**

1. Other than the qualifications of the translator, what are the two foundational things that are required for a sound Bible translation?
2. What are two other names for dynamic equivalency translation?
3. Since what decade has the United Bible Societies been committed to dynamic equivalency?
4. Who owns the copyright to the Today's English Version and the Contemporary English Version?
5. Geoff Horner of the British and Foreign Bible Society said in 1987 that what percentage of the United Bible Societies translations are dynamic equivalencies?
6. According to the goals set at its 1996 World Assembly, the United Bible Societies intend to produce a dynamic equivalency Bible for every language with how many speakers?
7. As for 2002, Wycliffe Bible Translators was involved in how many translation projects?
8. Kenneth Taylor said, "We take the ----- and convert it into the language of today."
9. The editor of the Contemporary English Version says it is not a word-for-word rendering but it is what?
10. Dynamic equivalency aims for what level of language?
11. The Bengali Common Language version aimed for what grade level?
12. Dynamic equivalency aims to make the Bible ----- to non-Christians?
13. The Contemporary English Version changes grace to what?
14. One UBS translation changed "white as snow" to what?
15. Another translation changed "dove" to what?
16. Another translation changed "fig tree" to what?
17. What passage says the prophets did not understand everything they were writing?
18. What verse says some of Paul's writings are hard to be understood?
19. What verse says the things in the Law of Moses were patterns of things in heaven?
20. William Tyndale testified that he would not alter even one ----- of God's Word.
21. Who was the chief guru of dynamic equivalency?
22. In what year did this man publish a groundbreaking book teaching dynamic equivalency?
23. This man claims that the Bible was not written "in a kind of ---- language."
24. This man claims that the blood of Christ was not an actual offering but merely "a ----- of the cost."
25. Robert Bratcher has changed the word "blood" to what?
26. What New Testament verse says without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin?
27. What two verses teach that we are justified by Christ's blood and reconciled by his death?
28. In what verse did Paul teach that the Holy Spirit gives words?
29. In what verse in Matthew did the Lord Jesus promise that the jots and tittles would not pass from the law until all be fulfilled?
30. What verse says the words of the Lord are purified seven times?
31. What verse says God's Word is forever settled in heaven?
32. What verse says the Scriptures contain the deep things of God?

33. How many times does God repeat the warning about adding to or taking away from His words?
34. What verse in Proverbs contains this warning?
35. What two verses at the end of the Bible contain this warning?
36. What is the most serious matter pertaining to the issue of dynamic equivalency?
37. Leland Ryken warned that readers of an English Bible should not be at the mercy of a “-----  
--- -----’s interpretation of a passage.”
38. What verse says the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit God?
39. Why is it wrong for the Bible translator to simplify the Bible so that the unsaved can understand it?
40. What verse says the believer must study to rightly divide the Word of God?
41. What verse says the believer must meditate upon the Scriptures and give himself wholly to them in order to profit thereby?
42. Does the Bible translator have the authority to ask what Moses or Paul would write if they were writing today?
43. What is the difference between authorship and translation?
44. Leland Ryken says that to picture the biblical writers “as writing in an era when they did not write is to engage in -----.”
45. Why is it not possible to know how the original headers of the Bible were impacted?
46. What three ways were the hearers of Paul’s sermon in Athens impacted?
47. Is it possible to have a translation that is overly literal?
48. Ryken says there is a crucial difference “between ----- interpretation and ----- interpretation.”
49. What is the proper solution to the problem of making the Bible understood by illiterate people?
50. What are the steps that should be taken if a language is so primitive that the Scripture cannot be translated accurately in it?
51. God has commanded that what be preached to all men?
52. Once fidelity to the language of the original is abandoned, “there are no ---- ----- on interpretation.”
53. How do the Bible societies overcome the resistance of church people to the dynamic equivalence versions?
54. Why should a Bible translation be majestic in style?
55. According to Leland Ryken, English professor at Wheaton College, what linguistic characteristic is like a qualifying exam for a Bible translation?
56. Should a sacred book sound like a sacred book or a newspaper?
57. Why do dynamic equivalencies result in people no longer being confident in the Bible as the literal Word of God?
58. What effect have the dynamic equivalencies had on the level of biblical literacy?
59. Why do the multiplication of dynamic equivalency versions result in a decrease in Bible memorization?
60. Why is it common for people attending Saddleback Community Church not to carry Bibles?
61. Why is the fear of God diminished by dynamic equivalency versions?

# IX. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE WE REJECT THE MAJORITY TEXT APPROACH

## Section Summary

1. Introductory points
2. What is the Majority Text?
3. How influential is the Majority Text?
4. Differences between the Received Text and the Majority Text
5. Reasons Why We Reject the Majority Text
6. Conclusion

## INTRODUCTORY POINTS

1. The Majority Text position is a new challenge to the Greek Received Text underlying the Reformation Bibles.
  - a. On the one hand the Received New Testament is challenged by the critical Greek text that was produced by modern textual criticism. This is represented today by the Nestles' Greek New Testament and the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.
  - b. On the other hand, the Received Text has been challenged since the 1980s by the "Majority Text." Basically this is an attempt to go back to Greek text of the Byzantine Empire that predated the 16th-century Reformation.
2. The Majority Text is vastly superior to the critical Greek text, but the difference between the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus is significant enough to force us to look at this issue carefully.
3. Let me also say at the outset of this study that while I strongly disagree with Zane Hodges, Arthur Farstad, and Wilbur Pickering in their support the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text position, I am thankful for their rejection of modern textual criticism and for the extensive research they have done in this field. They have brought important facts to light, and their writings are helpful, as long as one understands the Majority Text issue.

## WHAT IS THE MAJORITY TEXT?

1. Historically, the term "Majority Text" has been used as a synonym for the Received Greek New Testament (Textus Receptus or TR) published in the 16th century during the Reformation.
  - a. Strictly speaking the Received Greek Text is *a slightly modified form* of the

Byzantine or Traditional Greek New Testament that represents the majority of extant Greek manuscripts. While representing the majority of Greek manuscripts in most cases, the Reformation Received Text contains a few readings not supported by the majority but which are supported by the majority of Latin manuscripts, other versions, and quotations from ancient church leaders.

- b. Following are some major places where the Received Text is not supported by the majority of extant Greek manuscripts:

Matthew 27:35 -- “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.”

Acts 8:37 -- “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” [This verse has significant minority support in the Greek manuscripts.]

Acts 9:5-6 -- “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and the Lord said unto him.”

1 John 5:7 -- “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth”

- c. The reason why the Received Text is not entirely and strictly a majority text is simple. In determining the true reading of Scripture, other witnesses must be examined in addition to the extant Greek manuscripts, in particular, Greek lectionaries, ancient versions, and the quotations from the writings of “church fathers,” meaning church leaders who lived in the early centuries after the apostles. In a few cases, these witnesses point to readings more authentic than existing Greek manuscripts.

2. Since the 1980s, the term “Majority Text” has come to refer to something other than the Received Text of the Reformation. Currently there are two editions of the Majority Text, as follows:

- a. In 1982 Thomas Nelson published *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (hereafter referred to as the Hodges-Farstad Text). A second edition appeared in 1985.

(1) This was edited by Zane Hodges (1932- ) and Arthur Farstad (1935-98) of Dallas Theological Seminary. Hodges taught New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Dallas from 1959 to 1987, though his view of the Majority Text was

a minority position there. Hodges continues to teach a module entitled “New Testament Textual Criticism Majority Text Theory.” He was scheduled to teach this at Chafter Theological Seminary, Orange, California, May 10-28, 2004.

- (2) As its title implies, the Hodges-Farstad Text claims to be a Greek text that reflects the readings of the majority of extant Greek manuscripts.
- b. In 1991 *The Greek New Testament according to the Byzantine Text Form*, edited by Maurice Robinson (1947- ) and William Grover Pierpont (1915-2003), was published by Original Word Publishers, Roswell, Georgia. It was revised in 2000 and 2003. (This is usually referred to as the Robinson-Pierpont Text in the remainder of this study.) The Byzantine Text Form Greek New Testament is available in many of the Bible software packages, including Online Bible, Bible Works, and Logos.
- (1) This is another attempt to challenge the Reformation Received Greek Text with a “Majority Text.” The Byzantine Greek Text was the one used in the Greek Byzantine Empire until the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century. It is nearly perfect and had to be corrected in only a few places in the Reformation era.
  - (2) Like the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, the Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine is built upon Hermann von Soden’s faulty and extremely insufficient textual apparatus.
  - (3) Maurice Robinson is a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is very bold in his rejection of a “theological” approach to the text and is therefore no friend of faith. “The Byzantine-priority hypothesis ... does not encourage a simplistic eclectic approach nor a narrow theological outlook toward a predetermined result” (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*). The “narrow theological outlook,” of course, is a reference to a faith-preservation approach to the Bible text.
  - (4) William Pierpont (1915-2003) grew up in a Baptist church, but in the 1970s he joined an Evangelical Free congregation in Wichita, Kansas, and remained a member in that denomination until his death. He attended Friends College in Wichita for two years but had to drop out because of health problems. He taught himself to read Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and other languages. He worked at Beech Aircraft (as a self taught structural engineer) for 41 years until his retirement in 1982, but he had a sideline passion for the Greek New Testament. He had been taught to practice Westcott-Hort style modern textual criticism, but in the 1960s he began to question this approach and eventually developed his Byzantine priority theory. In the late 1970s, Pierpont met Robinson and they worked

together to produce a Greek New Testament after the Byzantine fashion. Pierpont died on Aug. 10, 2003, at age 88. See <http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol08/Pierpont2003obit.html> for a biographical sketch.

## HOW INFLUENTIAL IS THE MAJORITY TEXT?

1. The New King James Version, which was also published in 1982 by Thomas Nelson, has marginal notes supporting the “majority text.”

- a. The New King James Version (NKJV) contains approximately 500 footnotes that give what is supposedly the “majority reading” over against the Received Text reading.
- b. In fact, the New King James Version and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text are twin productions. Arthur Farstad was the general editor of the NKJV. The eventual goal is to produce a “definitive” Majority Text and to publish an English translation of this to compete in that already crowded field.

2. The Majority Text Society was founded by the late Arthur Farstad and has an address in Dallas, Texas. Its web address is <http://www.majoritytext.org/index.htm>. In 2005 Zane Hodges took over the presidency from James Davis, who will be teaching New Testament Studies at the Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary in the Middle East. In the announcement of his departure, Davis called Hodges a “founding father” of the MTS position (<http://www.majoritytext.org/newsletter1.htm>).

3. Wilbur Pickering supports the Majority Text position in his book *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Thomas Nelson, 1977, 1980). Zane Hodges wrote the foreword. Following is a statement on this by Pickering: “The critical edition of the ‘Byzantine’ text being prepared by Zane C. Hodges, Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary, Arthur Farstad, and others, and to be published by Thomas Nelson, will differ from the Textus Receptus in over a thousand places. ... Hodges will be very happy to hear from anyone interested in furthering *THE QUEST FOR THE DEFINITIVE TEXT*” (Pickering, *The Identity of New Testament Text*, 1977, pp. 212, 232-233, capitalization not in the original). The web site is <http://www.esgm.org/>.

4. Jakob Van Bruggen supports the Majority Text in his book *The Future of the Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 1972).

5. Jay Green, editor of the *Interlinear Bible* and author of many books on the Bible version issue (as well as the King James II and the Modern King James translations), promotes the Majority Text view (Sovereign Grace Publishers, Lafayette, Indiana). In the back of Green’s *Interlinear Bible* is a list of roughly 1,500 “majority text” readings that Green suggests should replace the

Received Text. He introduces the list with these words: “If the foregoing Received Text is modified by the following notes, it will then be in the closest possible agreement with the vast majority of all manuscripts.” He says this even though he certainly knows that “the vast majority of all manuscripts” have never been collated, so that no one knows what most of them read in the various passages he cites. In fact, Green got this list of allegedly superior majority readings from William Pierpont and Maurice Robinson. They produced the list as a preliminary to the publication of their *Greek New Testament according to the Byzantine Text Form* (<http://rosetta.reltech.org/TC/vol08/Pierpont2003obit.html>).

6. In 2002, the *English Majority Text Version New Testament* was published by Paul W. Esposito (Port St. Lucie, FL: Stauros Ministries). It is based on the Hodges-Farstad Text with consultation with the Robinson-Pierpont Text and the research of Wilbur Pickering.

7. *Logos 21* is another English version translated from the Hodges-Farstad Majority New Testament. It appears from the web site that only the Gospel of John has been published (<http://www2.livingwater.org/livingwater/about.html>). The editors also worked on the New King James Version. The general editor is Arthur L. Farstad and the English editor is William H. McDowell. Zane Hodges and Wilbur Pickering were also involved. Curtis Vaughan (one of the seven members of the Executive Review Committee for the NKJV and general editor of *The New Testament from 26 Translations*) “carefully annotated this entire translation.” The textual notes were written by James F. Davis.

8. Leland Haines argues for the Byzantine Text and a revision of the King James Bible on that basis in chapter six of the book *The Authority of Scripture* (Biblical Viewpoints Publications, Goshen, Indiana).

9. In 1984 Harry A. Sturz (1916-89) published *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson). Sturz was for many years Professor of Greek and Chairman of the Theology Department at Biola University in southern California. He was an ordained minister in the Grace Brethren Churches. *The Byzantine Text-Type* is a major work that argues against modern textual criticism’s position that the traditional Greek text is a mere later recension; Sturz urged that the Byzantine Text be given its proper value. Unlike Hodges, Farstad, and some of the others already mentioned, Sturz did not argue for a pure Byzantine text.

10. For a short time the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS), under the editorial direction of Andrew Brown, gave some support to the Majority Text view.

- a. Andrew Brown was Editorial Secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) for about a decade in the 1980s (until 1991) and in this position had considerable influence in the translation projects with which Trinitarian is involved and with the materials published by the TBS.



b. Brown's sympathy with the Majority Text position was evident in the following statements:

- (1) "*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text* (1982) has just been published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, New York, under the editorship of Professor Zane Hodges and Dr. A.L. Farstad. This new edition, as its title implies, contains the text found in the majority of Greek New Testament manuscripts. It differs from the Received Text in those passages where the manuscripts used by 16th century editors deviated from the overall manuscript consensus. ... Although this 'majority text' is not necessarily at all points identical with the original text, THE NEW EDITION IS ON THE WHOLE A RELIABLE GUIDE. It will be an indispensable tool for all who wish to study the differences between the various forms of Greek New Testament text, and between the competing translations to which the Greek variants give rise" (*Quarterly Record*, Trinitarian Bible Society, No. 482, 1982, pp. 14-16).
- (2) In the course of correspondence with me in regard to a new translation of the Bible in the Nepali language, Andrew Brown made the following statements:
  - (a) "We would also encourage you to refer to the 'Majority Text' which in certain passages is an improvement on the older Textus Receptus, where the TR does not represent the true consensus of the manuscripts. An edition of the Majority Text was published in the USA by Z. Hodges and A.L. Farstad in 1982, and is a valuable tool of reference" (Andrew Brown, letter to D.W. Cloud, April 4, 1984).
  - (b) When I asked Mr. Brown for a list of passages that are "improved" in the Majority Text, he refused to provide such a list but he did give me one example, from Hebrews 12:20: "... 'or thrust through with a dart'--is not accurate in the TR and AV, but that the Majority variant should be preferred here" (Andrew Brown, letter to D.W. Cloud, Jan. 7, 1985). I thought it was very strange that he would instruct me to use the alleged improved "majority readings" to correct the Received Text but he would not provide me with a list of such readings.
- (3) Andrew Brown was dismissed from the Trinitarian Bible Society in 1991. The present leaders have assured us that they do not support the Hodges-Farstad Text, but it is clear that Andrew Brown had considerable influence during the several years he was associated with this organization. Further, the aforementioned issue of the Trinitarian Bible Society *Quarterly Record* supporting the Hodges-Farstad Text was distributed throughout the world.

## **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RECEIVED TEXT AND THE MAJORITY TEXT**

1. There are 1,838 differences (most fairly insignificant) between the Received Text and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text (by Daniel Wallace's count as reported in "Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text," [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=673](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=673)).

2. To illustrate this matter, we will list some of the more significant omissions in the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text as compared to the TR. Please understand that this is not an exhaustive listing:

Matthew 27:35 -- "that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots." (19 words omitted in the Greek)

Mark 15:3 -- "but he answered nothing" (4 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 7:31 -- "And the Lord said" (4 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 9:1 -- "his disciples" (2 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 17:36 -- "Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." (12 words omitted in Greek)

Luke 20:19 -- "the people" (2 words omitted in Greek)

John 6:70 -- "Jesus" (1 word omitted in Greek)

John 10:8 -- "before me" (2 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 7:37 -- "him shall ye hear" (2 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 8:37 -- "And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (29 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 9:5,6 -- "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (20 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 9:17 -- "Jesus" (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 10:6 -- "he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (7 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 10:21 -- "which were sent unto him from Cornelius" (7 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 15:11 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 15:34 -- “Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still” (6 words omitted in Greek)

Acts 20:21 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Acts 24:6-8 -- “and would have judged according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, Commanding his accusers to come unto thee” (27 words omitted in Greek)

Romans 13:9 -- “Thou shalt not bear false witness” (2 words omitted in Greek)

2 Corinthians 8:4 -- “that we would receive” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Colossians 1:14 -- “through his blood” (2 words omitted in Greek)

1 Thessalonians 2:19 -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

2 Timothy 2:19 -- -- “Christ” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Hebrews 11:13 -- “and were persuaded” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Hebrews 12:20 -- “or thrust through with a dart” (3 words omitted in Greek)

1 John 5:7, 8 -- “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth” (25 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 1:8 -- “the beginning and the ending” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 1:11 -- “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and” (13 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 2:3 -- “hast laboured” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:4 -- “and to read” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:7 -- “the book” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:14 -- “four and twenty” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 5:14 -- “him that liveth forever and ever” (6 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 7:5-8 -- -- “were sealed” from 10 of the 12 references (10 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 8:7 -- “angel” (1 word omitted in Greek)

Revelation 8:13 -- “angel” changed to “eagle”

Revelation 11:1 -- “and the angel stood” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 11:17 -- “and art to come” (3 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 12:12 -- “to the inhabitants” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:1 -- “forty and four” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:3 -- “forty and four” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 14:5 -- “before the throne of God” (5 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 21:24 -- “of them which are saved” (2 words omitted in Greek)

Revelation 22:19 -- “book of life” is changed to “tree of life”

## **REASONS WHY WE REJECT THE “MAJORITY TEXT”**

**1. The Majority Text is a mythical text.** The Hodges-Farstad Greek New Testament and the Robinson-Pierpont Text both claim to represent a Majority of extant Greek manuscripts, but this is simply a myth.

- a. First of all, the extant Greek manuscripts have never been collated and examined in such a way that a majority text could be determined with any degree of certainty.

- (1) “... THE MAIN PROBLEM OF NT TEXTUAL CRITICISM LIES IN THE FACT THAT LITTLE MORE THAN THEIR ACTUAL EXISTENCE IS KNOWN OF MOST OF THE MANUSCRIPTS SO FAR IDENTIFIED, and that therefore we constantly have problems with many unknowns to solve. We proceed as if the few manuscripts, which have fully, or almost fully, studied, contained all the problems in question” (Kurt Aland, “The Significance of the Papyri”; cited from Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Conclusion).

- (2) In *The Text of the New Testament*, Kurt and Barbara Aland state that “MOST OF THE MINUSCULES HAVE NOT YET BEEN EXAMINED FOR THEIR TEXTUAL VALUE” (p. 128).
- (3) The Hodges-Farstad Text is based on the collations of Hermann von Soden from the early 20th century. Though this is the most extensive collation that has ever been made, it was a very partial, insufficient one. Note the following important testimonies about von Soden’s work:
- (a) “Von Soden and his assistants collated some hundreds of manuscripts, and published the results in a massive critical edition. In his footnotes, von Soden shows the majority text by the symbol K (short for Koine, or ‘common text’). However, AT ANY GIVEN INSTANCE OF THIS SYMBOL, ONE CAN RARELY BE SURE WHETHER VON SODEN CONSULTED ALL HIS MANUSCRIPTS AT THE PASSAGE IN QUESTION, OR CONSULTED JUST A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE. And even where he does give figures, the resulting total does not constitute a majority of all the manuscripts which are now available” (TSB *Quarterly Record*, Number 482, page 15).
  - (b) “Yet von Soden was a rationalist. HE SHOWED VERY LITTLE REGARD TOWARD THE RECEIVED TEXT and sought to rewrite it on the basis of his collations and rather novel theory of textual history. ... We will show that [Hodges and Farstad] have used von Soden very uncritically. We will also show that despite the massive scope of von Soden’s work, it is after all only a very small part of the total picture and cannot begin to be used in the way Hodges and Farstad have attempted” (Jack Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 8).
  - (c) “Now what needs to be seen here is that anyone who seeks to gather Byzantine MS evidence from the standard sources--Alford, Tischendorf, Souter, Merk, Vogels, Nestle, Aland, or von Soden--IS REALLY GETTING ONLY A FEW SCRAPS FROM THE TABLE. The energies of these men have been expended elsewhere. Their labours toward the great mass of Byzantine MSS is limited to those places where there is departure from the TR. ... Therefore Hodges and Farstad have based their edition upon an area of von Soden’s work where he gave the least attention” (Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 11).
  - (d) Kurt and Barbara Aland, while stating that von Soden’s apparatus “is a necessary tool for textual critics,” warn that “VON SODEN’S APPARATUS IS SO UNRELIABLE that the reader soon comes to regard this remarkably full apparatus as little more than a collection of variant readings whose attestation needs verification elsewhere. Von Soden’s edition was distinctly a failure” (Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 23).

- (e) In 1967 E.C. Colwell made the following statement before the International Greek New Testament Project (IGNT): “The preparation of a comprehensive textual apparatus has required attention to previous editions of the Greek NT, viz, Tischendorf, Tregelles, von Soden, Legg. CAREFUL STUDY SHOWED THAT THE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE IN THESE EDITIONS CANNOT BE USED IN THE IGNT APPARATUS, SINCE THEY FAIL TO CITE WITNESSES COMPLETELY, CONSISTENTLY, AND IN SOME CASES ACCURATELY’ (E.C. Colwell, “The International Greek New Testament Project: a Status Report,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXXXVI, 1968, 192, note 13).
  - (f) “It can only be said that the apparatus is POSITIVELY HONEYCOMBED WITH ERRORS, and many documents which should have been recollated have not been touched, others only partially, and others again have been incorrectly handled” (Herman Hoskier, *Journal of Textual Studies*, 15, 1914, p. 307; quoted from Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, p. 9).
  - (g) “Once the extent of error is seen, THE WORD ‘INACCURACY’ BECOMES A EUPHEMISM. Of the 99 checked MSS, 76 were missing one or more times when they should have been cited, or were listed when they should not have been. ... von Soden’s inaccuracies cannot be tolerated for any purpose. HIS APPARATUS IS USELESS FOR A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE TEXT OF THE MSS HE USED” (Frederik Wisse, *Profile Method*, pp. 16, 17; quoted from Moorman, p. 11).
- (4) The largest project being conducted at present toward the collation of Greek manuscripts is the work at The Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung [The Institute for New Testament Research] in Münster, Germany. According to Wilbur Pickering, this institute has “a collection of microfilms of some 4,500 of the extant Greek MSS (around 80 percent of them), and scholars connected with the institute are collating SELECTED ONES” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 edition, p. 150).
- (a) It is obvious that even this project will fall far short of the goal of producing the material necessary to determine a definitive majority text. Even though this Institute has a vast number of manuscripts on microfilm, Pickering observes that these represent only 80 percent of the total number known to be in existence.
  - (b) He also observes that the scholars are collating only “selected ones” from the 80% they have at hand. To our knowledge no one is in the process of digitizing and collating all of the manuscripts. One reason for this is that the theories of modern textual criticism held by those doing this work cause them to despise the Byzantine Greek manuscripts. Jack Moorman explains why the

modern textual critics are in no hurry to examine the vast majority of surviving Greek manuscripts. “It may come as a surprise that only a relative few of the 5,300 MSS now catalogued have been collated. ... Except for a few cursory checks the vast majority has been ignored. The reason is quite simple: The overwhelming majority of manuscripts support the TR/KJV; and seeking out any further support is the last thing textual criticism is interested in. Westcott and Hort certainly were not interested in giving the majority the chance to speak. ... In the past 100 years since Hort a further 1700-1800 cursives have been found. Added to these we have a total of nearly 2,200 lectionaries. Again, apart from a cursory glance to see if there might be some readings supportive of the Aleph-B kind of text, they have been merely catalogued and ignored. Attention, instead, has centered on the comparatively few papyri fragments, and what to do when they disagree with Aleph and B. ... what this present ‘age of minuscules’ means to the editors of the critical text is the hope that they might find a little more support for the Aleph/B/ Alexandrian kind of text. Despite appearances to the contrary and talk of being eclectic, Aleph, B and their few allies still dictate the modern critical text, and the feeling prevails that no purpose would be served in giving the majority of MSS a greater voice” (Moorman, *When the KJV Departs from the Majority Text*, pp. 4-6).

- (5) Thus, nowhere in the world is an effort being made toward the collation and examination of all or even most of the extant Greek manuscripts.
- b. Even the men who have produced the Majority Text admit that their current work is insufficient.
- (1) Hodges and Farstad admit that von Soden’s collations are insufficient to produce their desired result: “It should be understood, therefore, that ALL DECISIONS ABOUT MAJORITY READINGS ARE PROVISIONAL AND TENTATIVE. ... As all who are familiar with von Soden’s materials will know, his presentation of the data leaves much to be desired. ... What is urgently needed is a new apparatus covering the entire manuscript tradition. It should include complete collations of a very high percentage of the surviving majority text manuscripts (*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, pp. xxii, xxiii).
  - (2) Wilbur Pickering also admits that they are not in a position today to demonstrate a true majority of Greek manuscripts: “This means that not only are we PRESENTLY UNABLE TO SPECIFY THE PRECISE WORDING OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT, but it will require considerable time and effort before we can be in a position to do so. And the longer it takes us to mobilize and coordinate our efforts the longer it will be” (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1980 revision, pp. 149-150). I do not agree with Pickering. I believe we are

able to specify the precise wording of the original text. It is the traditional Masoretic Hebrew and Received Greek text underlying the Reformation Bibles. I believe this by faith and I do not need to wait until some Institute finally collates all surviving Greek manuscripts (if they ever will).

- c. In light of these facts, it is evident that the claim to have a true Majority Text based on the majority of Greek manuscripts is a myth, for no such thing exists and it is not possible at this time to make such a text.

## **2. The Hodges-Farstad Text is an insufficient text.**

- a. There are four major witnesses to the text of Scripture, as outlined by John Burgon in *The Revision Revised* (pp. 8-11) and the *Traditional Text of the Gospels* (pp. 19-39). (Sometimes these four witnesses are reduced to three, by grouping the Greek manuscripts and the Greek lectionaries into one category.)

- (1) The witness of Greek manuscripts. Divided into papyri (96), uncials (263), and minuscules (2,812), there are 3,171 Greek manuscripts extant today (by the count of Kurt and Barbara Aland in the second edition of *The Text of the New Testament*).

- (2) The witness of Greek lectionaries. These are Scripture readings used by churches. In contrast to the Greek manuscripts that give a “continuous text,” the lectionaries have an “interrupted text.” There are 2,280 lectionaries extant.

- (3) The witness of ancient versions. A translation into another language is an important witness to the text upon which it was founded. We have copies of many ancient versions, including Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic. In some cases (e.g., Syriac Peshitta and Old Latin) these are earlier than the oldest of the Greek uncials.

- (4) The witness of quotations from “church fathers,” or the writings of ancient preachers. When they quoted the Scripture, it is possible to see what text they were using. Burgon himself collated more than 86,000 quotations from ancient Christian writings, searching for textual evidence.

- b. Burgon emphasized that ALL of these witnesses are important and none are to be ignored. He called these four witnesses the “provision which the Divine Author of Scripture is found to have made for the preservation in its integrity of His written Word” (*The Revision Revised*, p. 8).
- c. This was the method followed by the Reformation editors. While giving priority to the Greek manuscripts they also weighed the ancient versions and quotations. This



is why they modified the Greek Byzantine text in a few places upon the added authority of Latin and other witnesses.

- d. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text (as well as the Robinson-Pierpont) is based upon only one of the four important witnesses to the original Text. In the foreword to *The Majority Text*, the editors make the following statement: “The present edition DOES NOT cite the testimony [1] of the ancient versions or [2] church fathers. [3] Nor are the lectionary texts considered. This is not because such sources have no value for textual criticism. Rather, it is due to the specific aims of this edition, in which the primary goal has been the presentation of the Majority Text as this appears in the regular manuscript tradition” (emphasis added) (*The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, 1982, p. xviii).

This sounds like a scholarly game to me. If the other areas of witness have value for textual criticism, why would you ignore them when attempting to reproduce the “original” New Testament? What kind of reasoning is this?

- e. Wilbur Pickering’s position in this is contradictory.

- (1) In 1977, in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Pickering said: “So then, how are we to identify the original wording? First we must gather the available evidence--this will include [1] Greek mss. [2] (including lectionaries), [3] Fathers, and [4] versions. Then we must evaluate the evidence to ascertain which form of the text enjoys the earliest, the fullest, the widest, the most respectable, the most varied attestation”(*Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1977 edition, p. 137).

- (2) On the other hand Pickering supports the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text that ignores a full three-fourths of this overall witness.

- e. It is not possible to come to the truth on textual issues while ignoring a large part of the evidence. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is therefore an insufficient text.

### **3. The Hodges-Farstad Text is a provisional text.**

- a. First we should note that the King James Bible is *not* a provisional Bible.

- (1) Its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts were brought out of the Dark Ages by believing editors who were not tainted by the gross skepticism of our modern times. Any skepticism that was incipient in Erasmus was restrained by his commitment to the commonly-received traditional text and by the larger faith that characterized his age. The great statements of faith were developed in that

age and were established upon that very Text. When the authors of the Westminster Confession spoke in 1648 of their confidence that the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek were “BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES,” they were referring to the Masoretic Hebrew and the Received Greek that underlies the King James Bible. For men of God in those times, the Bible they had was anything but provisional.

- (2) It is the product of 85 years of translation work (from Tyndale in 1526, through the Coverdale, the Matthew’s, the Bishops, the Geneva, to the KJV in 1611, not to speak of the Wycliffe Bible of the late 14th century that laid an important foundation for succeeding English versions). The King James revision alone was done by roughly 50 scholars of the highest caliber and each part of the revision was examined at least 14 times in a peerless process.
  - (3) It was refined in the fires of persecution. Two of the translators of versions that preceded the KJV were martyred for their faith (William Tyndale and John Rogers). Another (Wycliffe) was condemned as a heretic and his bones were burned. The translators of the Geneva Bible had to flee England because of their faith. Hundreds of the readers of these English Bibles were imprisoned and abused, and thousands of copies were burned in the flames.
  - (4) It has been tested for almost four centuries in churches throughout the world, and it has been loved by scholars and common people alike.
  - (5) A massive number of Bible study tools and materials have been laboriously developed around the KJV. Consider Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance*. Strong did not dedicate his earthly life to produce that work because of money. He was not hired by some wealthy Bible publishing firm; he did the work as an internal compulsion before God and as a labor of love.
- b. The Majority Text, though, is merely and only provisional, as admitted by its editors.
- (1) This is true for the Hodges-Farstad Text.
    - (a) “The editors do not imagine that the text of this edition represents in all particulars the exact form of the originals. Desirable as such a text certainly is, much further work must be done before it can be produced. It should therefore be kept in mind that THE PRESENT WORK, *THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT ACCORDING TO THE MAJORITY TEXT*, IS BOTH PRELIMINARY AND PROVISIONAL. It represents A FIRST STEP in the direction of recognizing the value and authority of the great mass of

surviving Greek documents. The use made of those documents in this edition must be subjected to scrutiny and evaluation by competent scholars. Such scrutiny, if properly carried out, can result in further progress toward a Greek New Testament which most accurately reflects the inspired autographs” (Introduction, *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, 1982, p. x).

- (b) This is also acknowledged by Wilbur Pickering, a consulting editor for the work: “The critical edition of the ‘Byzantine’ text being prepared by Zane C. Hodges, Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at the Dallas Theological Seminary, Arthur Farstad, and others, and to be published by Thomas Nelson, will differ from the Textus Receptus in over a thousand places. ... Hodges ... will be very happy to hear from anyone interested in furthering THE QUEST FOR THE DEFINITIVE TEXT” (emphasis added) (Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, pp. 212, 232-233).
- (c) In the latest edition of his book Pickering says the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is “an excellent INTERIM Greek Text to use UNTIL THE FULL AND FINAL STORY CAN BE TOLD.”

- (2) The same is true for the Robinson-Pierpont Text. Maurice Robinson’s “Byzantine priority” methodology is a “QUEST TOWARD THE GOAL of establishing the original text of the canonical Greek New Testament,” a quest that requires diligent labor (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

- c. This is a plain testimony against divine preservation. If after 2,000 years of church history, if after the glorious Reformation, if after the grand missionary thrust of these last days, if after centuries of unprecedented worldwide Bible distribution, if after all of the biblical scholarship of the past 500 years, if after all of that we are still waiting to discover the “original text” of the New Testament, why should we believe that we would ever find it? Standing, as we are, at the end of the greatest period of spiritual revival and world missionary activity history has witnessed since the apostolic age, are we still searching for the definitive text of God’s Word; are we still dependent on a “provisional” text and still on a “quest” toward producing a definitive text? Was that Received Text which was carried throughout the world from 1500 to 1900 (and which continues to be carried throughout the world by the many missionaries who are committed to it) only a provisional text as we are led to believe by these quotes? I contend this is not the case.

#### **4. The Hodges-Farstad Text is an inconsistent text.**

Following are two ways in which the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is inconsistent:

- a. It is inconsistent in that it does not consistently follow its own majority principle. Of the readings adopted in *The Majority Text*, 1240 “are shown in the footnotes as NOT having a clear overall majority of manuscripts in their favour. Further; in John 7:53-8:11 and Revelation ... the editors have on a number of occasions adopted a reading found only in a minority of manuscripts” (*Quarterly Record*, Trinitarian Bible Society, No. 482, p. 14). We see, then, that even in the matter of the selection of readings, the “majority principle” is abandoned quite often in the Majority Text. This is a strange inconsistency.
- b. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is also inconsistent in that some Westcott-Hort principles are employed even though the editors call these principles defective.
  - (1) The Westcott-Hort principle of the Genealogical Method is employed.
    - (a) In the introduction to the Hodges-Farstad Greek New Testament we read: “Final decisions about readings ought to be made on the basis of a reconstruction of their history in the manuscript tradition. This means that for each New Testament book a genealogy of the manuscripts ought to be constructed. ... It is true, of course, that most modern textual critics have despaired of the possibility of using the genealogical method. Nevertheless, this method remains the only logical one” (p. xii).
    - (b) John Burgon wisely observed: “High time however is it to declare that, in strictness, all this talk about ‘genealogical evidence,’ when applied to Manuscripts is--MOONSHINE. ... And perforce all talk about ‘Genealogical evidence,’ where no single step in the descent can be produced--in other words, where no Genealogical evidence exists--is absurd” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 255-56). No evidence has been unearthed since Burgon’s day that would require a change to his wise assessment of the “genealogical method.”
  - (2) The Westcott-Hort principle of Intrinsic and Transcriptional Probability.
    - (a) The editors of the Hodges-Farstad Greek N.T. state: “Where K itself was sharply divided within an M reading, the rival variations were weighed both in terms of their distribution within the majority tradition as a whole and with regard to intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities. Occasionally, a transcriptional consideration outweighs even a preponderance of contradictory testimony from K (p. xxii).
    - (b) Hort defined intrinsic probability as having reference to the author of the text and transcriptional probability as having reference to the copyists. In applying these principles, the Greek editor asks himself, “What would the author have most likely have written in this place, and what would the

copyists most likely have copied.” In spite of the claims of textual critics otherwise, IT IS PURELY SUBJECTIVE. It legitimizes guessing.

- (c) John Burgon dismissed intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities out of hand. “So far from thinking with Dr. Hort that ‘the value of the evidence obtained from transcriptional probability is incontestable,’--for that, ‘without its aid, textual criticism could rarely obtain a high degree of security,’ (p. 24)--we venture to declare that inasmuch as one expert’s notions of what is ‘transcriptionally probable’ prove to be the diametrical reverse of another expert’s notions, the supposed evidence to be derived from this source may, with advantage, be neglected altogether. Let the study of documentary evidence be allowed to take its place. Notions of ‘probability’ are the very pest of those departments of Science which admit of an appeal to fact” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, p. 252).
- (d) Wilbur Pickering refuted the Westcott-Hort principle of intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*. He wisely observes, “NO TWENTIETH CENTURY MAN CONFRONTING A SET OF VARIANT READINGS CAN KNOW OR PROVE WHAT ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE TO PRODUCE THE VARIANTS” (p. 78). That is the crux of the matter. Why, then, does Pickering support the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text that employs this bogus principle?

(3) Because it borrows from the field of modern textual criticism, the Majority Text position does not have the simplicity of biblical truth.

- (a) 2 Cor. 11:3 warns that the devil complicates the truth and corrupts “the simplicity that is in Christ.” The Lord Jesus rejoiced that the Father has revealed His truth to babes and not to the wise of this world (Mat. 11:25). Paul revealed that God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise (1 Cor. 1:27). The truth can be preached in any congregation of ordinary Spirit-led believers and be understood.
- (b) Contrast this simplicity with the complexity of modern textual criticism, with its intrinsic and transcriptional probabilities, its genealogical methods, etc. Maurice Robinson, co-author of the *Robinson-Pierpont Byzantine Majority Text*, calls his textual criticism “the Byzantine-priority method” and it is as complicated as standard modern textual criticism. In fact, Robinson plainly states that his textual criticism is complicated: “The Byzantine-priority hypothesis is far more complex than it may appear; it does not encourage a simplistic eclectic approach nor a narrow theological outlook toward a predetermined result” (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*). The “narrow theological outlook,” of course, is a reference to a faith-preservation approach.

- c. The Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is therefore an inconsistent work. It claims to be an attempt to follow a purely Majority principle, but this is not the case. The claim is made by the editors that Westcott-Hort principles are rejected, but the truth is that some of those very principles are employed. Such gross inconsistency in a work of this nature is inexcusable and is yet another reason why God's people should reject The Majority Text. In no sense does it represent an improvement over the Received Text.

**5. The Majority Text position encourages preferences rather than convictions.**

- a. The Majority Text is preferred by some fundamentalists who also have no serious qualms against the critical text; it is more a scholarly preference than a deeply held conviction.
- b. In this it is similar to the New King James Version. I don't know of any man who uses the New King James who has a strong conviction about the preservation of the underlying Greek text. It is a choice, a preference, oftentimes a convenience, but not a conviction. Further, the use of the NKJV is usually a stepping-stone to the critical text and the modern versions based on it, and I believe the Majority Text position is also a stepping-stone to modern textual criticism, as noted under our next point.

**6. There is great potential for the Majority Text method to lead to (1) endless speculation and uncertainty and (2) to give students an itch for modern textual criticism.**

I believe that just as the New King James Bible tends to open the door to the acceptance of the modern English versions the Majority Greek Text tends to open the door to the acceptance of modern textual criticism.

- a. Since the Majority Text position is not predicated upon faith in divine preservation, it can never result in the truth. The textual record alone can never lead us to the preserved Scripture; the record must be observed through the eyes of faith in the divine promises. I have met believers who have been confused by the Majority Text position. They can no longer hold to the Received Text or to the KJV with confidence, but the only replacement they have is a "provisional" Greek text.
- b. Further, the Majority Text position teaches the Bible student that he needs to do textual criticism, that he needs to search for and recover the Apostolic Text to some extent, that he needs to be on a "quest" for a definitive text. I fear that the "little bit" of textual criticism that the Majority Text position encourages will not be satisfying to many scholarly students. They will be tempted to move farther out onto the uncertain seas of modern textual criticism. There is no anchor of faith to ground them.

- c. Look what has happened to Zane Hodges. “I see in this entire regression from the Dean John Burgon methodology once espoused by Zane C. Hodges indeed a sad spectacle. I remember how Hodges for years had a paper he entitled a defense of the ‘Textus Receptus.’ Then he changed the title to the ‘Majority Text.’ I have seen him move closer and closer to the former Westcott and Hort position of textual criticism. Now we have seen him use the genealogical method of the Hortian heretics. We have seen him being quite at home with the intrinsic and transcriptional probability of these same heretics. Where will it all end? Is there no bottom? One of our DBS Vice Presidents, Dr. David Otis Fuller, uses the expression ‘scholarolatry.’ Is this what Hodges is guilty of now?” (Donald Waite, *The Dean Burgon News*, May-August, 1985, pp. 2-4).

## **7. The Hodges-Farstad Text flies in the face of divine preservation.**

- a. I cannot emphasize too strongly that the heart of this issue is faith and the doctrine of divine preservation of Scripture. Consider just a few of God’s promises. (For a more exhaustive study of this doctrine see *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part I, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because of Divine Preservation.”)

### Matthew 5:18

- (1) The Lord Jesus was certain about the preservation of God’s Word. Even the smallest details will be preserved. This can only be accomplished by God’s providential intervention in the transmission of the Bible through the centuries.
- (2) Though Christ was referring to the Old Testament, the same must apply to the New, in that it is equally the infallibly inspired Word of God and in fact exceeds the Old in glory (2 Cor. 3:9).

### Matthew 24:35

- (1) This is an amazing promise and it contains important doctrine about the inspiration and preservation of Scripture. Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega, the Author of history, promised that His words would not pass away; thus He is promising that His words will be inscripturated and preserved.
- (2) The doctrines of inspiration and preservation are intimately associated throughout Scripture. The association is not merely logical; it is scriptural; it is not merely inferred; it is plainly stated.
- (3) Christ’s promise here applies, first, to the four Gospels. It teaches us that the Gospels are supernatural. The human authors did not have to fumble around in a naturalistic manner as most textbooks on the history of the Bible presume,

borrowing from one another and from other documents, imperfectly and inaccurately describing things. The entire foundation of the modern field of “form or redaction criticism” is vain and heretical. It is vain because it is impossible at this point in history to know how the Gospels were written from a human perspective and it is heretical because God’s Word informs us that the writing of the Gospels was supernatural and gives no emphasis to the “human element.”

- (4) Christ’s promise applies not only to the four Gospels but also to all of the words of the New Testament as given by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11).

Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 2:2

These passages describe *the process of preservation*. Evangelicals and fundamentalists who defend textual criticism would have us believe that while the Bible contains a general promise of preservation (if not directly, at least by implication, they say), it does not describe *the means* of preservation. For example, in an e-mail written to me in December 2000, Dr. James Price, a professor at Tennessee Temple Seminary and the chairman of the Old Testament committee of the New King James Bible, said: “I know the passages that infer preservation, and I believe the doctrine. I just don’t think that the Bible explicitly states how God preserved His word.” The fact is that the Bible not only infers preservation it specifically promises it (so that it is an actual Bible doctrine) and it *does* tell us *how* it will be accomplished.

- (1) God preserves His Word among the churches as it is being obeyed and as the Great Commission is being conducted (Mat. 28:19-20). In the Old Testament it was the Jewish priests who preserved God’s Word (Deut. 17:18; Rom. 3:1-2). In the New Testament the priesthood is composed of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9) and it is the churches that keep God’s Word as they carry out the Great Commission (1 Tim. 3:15; Mat. 28:19-20).
- (a) Thus the Scriptures have been preserved in the church age not by exalted scholars but by humble believers.
  - (b) Christ is foretelling the inscripturating of His words and teaching. The fulfillment of this is found in the divinely-given New Testament Scriptures, whereby the churches are able to hold fast to the “faith once delivered to the saints.”
  - (c) Christ does not foresee that His Words will need to be recovered; rather, He describes a process of continual preservation that will endure until the end of the age. The Lord Jesus Christ, who knows the beginning from the end, assumed that the Word of God would be available from generation to generation through the church age. Otherwise, it would not be possible for



succeeding generations to teach the “all things” of the New Testament faith (Mat. 28:20).

- (d) We see that the Scriptures are not preserved by being hidden away (such as in a remote monastery in the Sinai desert or the Vatican Library) but by being used. Dr. Stewart Custer of Bob Jones University says, “God has preserved His word in the sands of Egypt” (stated during a debate in Marquette Manor Baptist Church, Chicago, 1984). He is referring to the view held by modern textual critics that the pure New Testament manuscripts were replaced in the 4th century by corrupt ones and were not “recovered” until the 19th century when the handful of Egyptian or Alexandrian manuscripts were given prominence, but this flies in the face of the Scriptures’ own testimony. “God did not preserve His Word in the ‘disusing’ but in the ‘using.’ He did not preserve the Word by it being stored away or buried, but rather through its use and transmission in the hands of humble believers” (Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, 1985, p. 90).
- (e) The witness of the Latin manuscripts and other versions have significance in determining the text of Scripture, because these were even more commonly used by the churches through the Dark Ages than the Greek. Likewise, in this light the lectionaries that were read in the churches and the quotations from church leaders are important witnesses. This is why the Reformation editors looked to the Latin as an important secondary witness after the Greek. Thus in a few places there is more testimony to the preserved text in the Latin than the Greek (i.e., Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7). Dr. Edward F. Hills observed, “...it was not trickery that was responsible for the inclusion of the *Johannine Comma* in the Textus Receptus [referring to the claim that a Greek manuscript was fabricated by Erasmus’ contemporaries to support this verse], but the usage of the Latin speaking Church.” This is the chief reason that we reject the Majority Text or pure Byzantine Text position. We cannot ignore the Latin and concern ourselves strictly with finding a majority of the Greek. And when we refer to the Latin, we are not talking merely about Rome’s Latin Vulgate but much more of those lovely little hand-size ancient “dissident” versions that were based on Latin and that were used by Bible believers such as the Anabaptists and Waldenses and Lollards down through the Dark Ages, the pre-Reformation Romaunt, Spanish, German, Italian, French, Czech, English (Wycliffe 1380), etc. Most, if not all, of these contained the *Johannine Comma* in 1 John 5:7, and it is that type of evidence that convinced the Reformation editors of its authenticity.
- (f) The purest Bible manuscripts and translations were literally used up in the process of time so that they were replaced with new copies. This is why ancient manuscripts that are in mint condition such as the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus are deeply suspect. They weren’t used! The majority of ancient uncials extant are mere fragments because they were worn out and come down to us only in pieces. The fact that manuscripts such as the Vaticanus

and Sinaiticus come down to us relatively intact from ancient times is due to their corruption and disuse. This process continues today. Though I have only been saved 32 years, I have worn out Bibles and replaced them with new ones. Ancient manuscripts would ordinarily have worn out even more quickly than modern Bibles, because they were used not only for reading and study but also for copying.

- (2) The churches are to hold to apostolic teaching (and Scripture) in every detail and they also are to pass “the same” and “all things” along from generation to generation (Mat. 28:20; 2 Tim. 2:2). The words “the same” and “all things” describe the process of the preservation of inscripturated apostolic teaching. Thus we see the role of individual churches in the task of Bible preservation.
- (3) God’s people and the churches are to be zealous for the details of the Scripture, for the “spots” (1 Tim. 6:14). The lax attitude that characterizes the textual criticism position, that the omission of thousands of words is of little significance, is not Scriptural.
- (4) “Faithful men” play an important role in Bible preservation, because it is only such men who will care enough to guard the Word and who will have the spiritual discernment necessary for the task.
- (5) God preserves His Word by His own power (Mat. 19:20). Christ explains how the preservation of Scripture can be possible in light of human frailty and the vicious and unceasing assault of the devil. It is possible because of God’s active role in preserving it. We see this in Christ’s promise, “lo, I am with you alway.” Though men have an important part to play in the process of preservation, it is God Himself who has preserved the Scripture. Modern textual critics focus almost exclusively upon *man*’s role in the transmission of the text, but the Bible believer traces the hand of *God*.
- (6) This process has continued down to the end of the church age (Mat. 28:20).
  - (a) It was in operation through the Dark Ages of Rome’s rule. This is why we know that the preserved Word of God is found in the majority of Greek and Latin manuscripts and translations thereof that were in common use among the churches during those centuries and not in the Alexandrian text that was commonly rejected.
  - (b) This process was in operation during the 16th and 17th centuries when the Reformation editors and translators put the Scriptures into print. They understood that the preserved New Testament was found largely in the Greek Byzantine text that had come down from Antioch in the early centuries of the

church age and secondarily in the Latin that was widely used during the Dark Ages (not so much by Rome as by “dissident” or separatist Bible believers such as the Waldenses and the Lollards who used Latin-based versions). In a few instances, such as the Trinitarian statement of 1 John 5:7, the Scripture was preserved more in Latin and in other versions such as the Waldensian Romant, the early German (e.g., the Tepl), and early English (the Wycliffe version). But always it was preserved in the common usage among the churches.

- (c) This process was in operation in the 19th century, when the Scripture continued to be preserved in the Bible-believing churches that resisted the tide of skepticism coming from Germany. Modern textual criticism was never popular in believing churches in that century. In fact, it was strongly resisted.
  - (d) This process is still in operation today. By the late 20th century, the tide of end time apostasy was so powerful that the corrupt critical Greek text and the translations thereof had become the majority, but Bible believing churches continue, in the midst of this apostasy, to love, preach, and defend the preserved Scripture. Most of the staunchly fundamentalist churches today that are boldly resisting the ecumenical tide continue to love the King James Bible and other Received Text versions.
- b. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is in conflict with the Majority Text position. Consider, for example, Wilbur Pickering, one of the influential voices in the Majority Text debate.

(1) Pickering dismisses the faith approach to the text.

- (a) He rejects the faith approach of Edward F. Hills, saying, “I agree with Ehrman’s critique of Hill’s position, though his is not the first--Hill’s position is inconsistent and arbitrary, and does not square with the evidence” (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, Appendix A “Inspiration and Preservation”). Thus Pickering sides with the skeptic Ehrman, who does not even believe there was an established apostolic orthodoxy in the first century, against the believer Hills.
- (b) Pickering speaks of those who “perversely persist in affirming that my case is based on theological presupposition.” Thus he strongly affirms that his principles of textual criticism are NOT based on the Bible and faith, are not predicated upon providential preservation.
- (c) As a result, Pickering is treated with a little more respect by the proponents of modern textual criticism, who so lightly dismiss men like John Burgon and Edward Hills. Consider, for example, the following statement by Daniel Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary: “What was new, however, with Pickering’s approach was perhaps a combination of things: his theological

invectives were subdued (especially compared with those of the Textus Receptus-advocating fundamentalist pamphleteers); his theological presuppositions regarding preservation were also played down; his treatment appeared sane, reasonable, and thorough...”(Daniel Wallace, “Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text,” [http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=673](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=673)). To the modern textual critic, sanity is rejecting the common Text of church history.

(2) Pickering claims that the Bible merely “infers” that God would preserve the Scripture and that “nowhere does it say how He proposed to do it...”

- (a) To the contrary, the Bible’s statements on preservation are clear and unequivocal. Away with this business that preservation is merely inferred! In *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part I, “We Hold to the King James Bible Because of the Doctrine of Preservation,” we examine dozens of Scriptures that explicitly teach the doctrine of preservation. In *Faith vs. the Modern Bible Versions*, Part X, “We Hold to the KJV Because of the Evil Fruit of the Modern Versions,” we give further examples of evangelicals and fundamentalists who claim that the Bible does not explicitly teach preservation.
- (b) Further, God *has* told us how He would preserve the Scripture. It would be preserved in its usage by the churches. It would be passed along from generation to generation by the priesthood of believers as part of the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).
- (c) The New Testament text that fits that definition since the Protestant Reformation is the Received Text in Greek and the King James Bible in English. Pickering wants to go back to the Byzantine Greek New Testament, but that is a step backward not forward. The wise textual editors in the 16th century understood that the Byzantine Greek New Testament in general contained some few corruptions and they purified it and published it to the ends of the earth in the slightly modified form of the Reformation Received Text.

(3) Only at the very end of his book does Pickering throw out a bone to faith.

- (a) After making every effort to belittle Edward Hills’ faith position, Pickering *concludes* his book by quoting Hebrews 11:6: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
- (b) Thus Pickering *CONCLUDES* his position with a salute to faith, even after severely distancing himself from those like Dr. Edward Hills who *PREDICATE* their “textual criticism” on faith! It appears that Dr. Pickering too much yearns to be “recognized” by the scholars, and one must always

compromise the faith to reach that objective. Jack Moorman wisely observes: "... if the critics misrepresent us because we present biblical truth, and if they become uncomfortable with this, what does it matter? Who are we trying to please, God or man? Must we participate in their neutrality and unbelief in order to gain a hearing from them? Must we yield to peer pressure? Must we put our good friends ahead of our good Bible?" (*When the Majority Text Departs*, p. 1).

c. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is also in conflict with the position of Maurice Robinson, co-author of the *Robinson-Pierpoint Byzantine Text*.

- (1) Robinson says: "Byzantine-priority provides no domain or shelter for those unwilling to labor diligently, or for unscholarly individuals whose goal is merely a biased theological perspective or the advocacy of a particular translation." (Robinson, *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*).

*Comment:*

- (a) It is obvious that Robinson has no time for "a biased theological perspective." It is strange to hear a supposed evangelical Christian referring to biblical theology in terms of bias. This is precisely the charge that is made against creationists by evolutionists. We wonder how Robinson approaches the subject of origins and whether he simply believes the Bible's testimony or whether he allows room for the "natural record" to overthrow the Bible.
  - (b) He refers to "unscholarly individuals," pretending that those who do not practice textual criticism of some sort are ignorant. The arrogance of textual critics never ceases to amaze me. Edward Hills had every scholarly credential in this field, but since he was committed to a "theological perspective," he is branded unscholarly.
  - (c) Robinson refers to diligent labor. Where did Jesus Christ or the Apostles teach that the believer must "labor diligently" to find the Scripture? Why could it not be, Mr. Robinson, that God has preserved His Scripture in the honorable Greek Received Text and that instead of laboring to recover the Scripture through secular principles of textual criticism we should be laboring to proclaim it to the ends of the earth in obedience to His command?
  - (d) He is opposed to "the advocacy of a particular translation." How is it that God inspired one Scripture originally but today that one Scripture must be represented by many conflicting versions?
- (2) Robinson says: "For advocates of the TR/KJV position, the 'theological argument' regarding the conflict between God and Satan is primary, centering upon the 'providential preservation' of a specific and unique text, unlike that

found in any single manuscript or texttype, including the Byzantine Textform. FOR ADVOCATES OF THE BYZANTINE-PRIORITY HYPOTHESIS, THE UNDERLYING THEOLOGICAL FACTORS TAKE A SECONDARY ROLE IN THE REALM OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM. Nor can we summarily dismiss the manuscripts of competing texttypes as ‘useless’ or ‘heretical.’ Neither the Alexandrian nor the Western manuscripts in themselves present a deliberately ‘evil’ text--only a text which (under the present hypothesis) has suffered from scribal corruption and/or ‘creativity’ to an adverse degree--a situation which has lessened their overall value and authority” (Maurice Robinson, “The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to ‘Majority Text’ Theory,” Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991).

*Comment:*

- (a) Though it is true that the Greek Received Text differs from any single manuscript or texttype (a continually shifting term that was invented by modern textual criticism), it only does so very slightly. It is so slight that for more than 450 years (from 1500 to 1980) it was common for the Received Text and the Majority Text and the Byzantine Text to be used as synonyms. God has not promised that corruptions will not creep into the text, only that the text will be preserved in spite of the corruptions. We believe that some few errors that had come to reside in the majority of Greek manuscripts were purified in the Reformation era as the Scripture came out of the Dark Ages.
- (b) Robinson boldly but unconvincingly claims that neither the Alexandrian nor the Western manuscripts present a deliberately evil or heretical text. He has no evidence of this. He doesn’t even know the history of these manuscripts. In fact, since they contain readings of a doctrinal nature that differ from the Traditional Text, there is good reason to believe that heretics *were* involved. There is a wealth of historical evidence that manuscripts were tampered with on a large scale in the first centuries after the apostles. Frederick Scrivener observed: “...THE WORST CORRUPTIONS TO WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT HAS EVER BEEN SUBJECTED, ORIGINATED WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER IT WAS COMPOSED ... Irenaeus (AD 150), and the African Fathers, and the whole Western, with a portion of the Syrian Church, used far inferior manuscripts to those employed by Stunica, or Erasmus, or Stephens thirteen centuries later, when moulding the Received Text” (Scrivener, *Introduction to New Testament Criticism*, 3rd edition, p. 511). And John Burgon adds: “WE KNOW THAT ORIGEN IN PALESTINE, LUCIAN AT ANTIOCH, HESCHIUS IN EGYPT, ‘REVISED’ THE TEXT OF THE N.T. Unfortunately, they did their work in an age when such fatal misapprehension prevailed on the subject, that each in turn will have inevitably imported a fresh assortment of *monstra* into the

sacred writings. Add, the baneful influence of such spirits as Theophilus (sixth Bishop of Antioch, A.D. 168), Tatian, Ammonius, &c., of whom there must have been a vast number in the primitive age,--some of whose productions, we know for certain, were freely multiplied in every quarter of ancient Christendom:--add, the fabricated gospels which anciently abounded ... and WE HAVE SUFFICIENTLY EXPLAINED HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT NOT A FEW OF THE CODICES OF ANCIENT CHRISTENDOM MUST HAVE EXHIBITED A TEXT WHICH WAS EVEN SCANDALOUSLY CORRUPT” (*The Revision Revised*, pp. 29, 30).

- (3) Robinson says: “Some authentic ‘Majority Text’ advocates have been unfairly lumped with this extreme position, even though these individuals have made it plain that they are not in sympathy with such an absurd agenda. The present writer desires to make it absolutely clear that he is not tied to such an agenda in any way” (Maurice Robinson, “The Case for the Byzantine Textform: A New Approach to ‘Majority Text’ Theory,” Southeastern Regional Meeting, Evangelical Theological Society, at Toccoa Falls College, March 8-9, 1991).

*Comment:* The position that God’s people held in the Reformation and that was common until the late 19th century, that God had preserved the Scriptures in the Greek Received Text, is called “absurd” by Robinson. Consider, for example, the Westminster Confession of Faith, 1648: “The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.” The Presbyterian authors of this confession were referring to the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Received Text. This statement on preservation was affirmed by Baptists in the London Confession of 1677 as well as the Philadelphia Confession of 1742. Men of God in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries believed in divine preservation AS IT APPLIED TO THE SCRIPTURES THEY POSSESSED IN THE MASORETIC HEBREW AND THE GREEK RECEIVED TEXT. But to the modern textual critic, who has drank too deeply from the wells of unbelieving modern biblical scholarship, this is absurd and extreme.

- d. The plain teaching of the Scriptures on divine preservation is also in conflict with the position of Harry Sturz, author of *The Byzantine Text-Type*.
  - (1) Sturz argued against making the doctrine of preservation a corollary or consequence of inspiration. “It should be pointed out that providential preservation is not a necessary consequence of inspiration. Preservation of the Word of God is promised in Scripture, and inspiration and preservation are related doctrines, but they are distinct from each other, and there is a danger in

making one the necessary corollary of the other. The Scriptures do not do this. God, having given the perfect revelation by verbal inspiration, was under no special or logical obligation to see that man did not corrupt it” (*The Byzantine Text-Type*, p. 38).

- (a) Sturz’s statement is strangely contradictory. To say that preservation is promised in the Bible and is therefore a doctrine and then to say that God is under no special obligation to preserve the Scripture is to speak nonsense. This confusing, nonsensical position is the place that every professing evangelical or fundamentalist is driven when he attempts to reconcile modern textual criticism, which is a secular and non-faith practice, with his biblical faith.
  - (b) Sturz’s statement is also misguided and off target. He misrepresents the position of John Burgon and Edward Hills. They would have agreed with Sturz that inspiration and preservation are not exactly the same. The way that Sturz defines preservation as a corollary of inspiration is contrary to how Burgon and Hills defined it. It is a straw man. They defined preservation as a corollary of inspiration in the sense that it is reasonable and scriptural to assume that the God who gave an infallible Scripture would preserve it so that it was not lost, but they did not define preservation as a corollary of inspiration in the sense that every manuscript would be kept from error or any such thing.
  - (c) In claiming that we should not tie inspiration and preservation together, Sturz rejected the godly faith held by God’s people in centuries past. The Westminster Confession of Faith of 1648, which was repeated in the London Baptist Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia Confession of 1742, stated that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are “immediately inspired by God and “BY HIS SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE, KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES.” Francis Turretin, professor of theology at Geneva and prominent Reformed Protestant leader, said in 1674: “Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their entire preservation.” John Owen, English Puritan leader, said in about 1670, “But yet we affirm, that the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption.” In each case, these confessions were tied to the Greek Received Text that was in common use in those days.
- (2) Sturz based his argument against tying together inspiration and preservation on the fact that the manuscript record has varieties, even within the Byzantine text tradition. “One danger of such a position is that the faith of some has been weakened when they have become aware of variant readings in the manuscripts precisely because they have confounded preservation with inspiration. ... He did not stipulate in the Scriptures that He would keep Christian scribes from error or



that the text-type with the most copies would be the best text” (*The Byzantine Text-Type*, p. 38).

- (a) Faith is based strictly upon God’s promises and is the opposite of sight. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1). To interpret the Bible by “the record” is the same mistake that the evolutionist commits. This is backwards. The record, whether of fossils or of biblical manuscripts, can only properly be interpreted through the eyes of faith in the Scriptures.
- (b) Sturz presented a strawman when he said that God did not stipulate that He would keep scribes from error. To my knowledge, no defender of the King James Bible has made such a claim. Sturz is critiquing John Burgon and Edward Hills, and it is certain that neither of these men made this claim. We know that scribes were not kept from error. The promise of preservation is not a claim that every copier of Scripture would become infallible or that God would not allow any corruption to enter the manuscript record. Preservation does not guarantee that God would keep the Scriptures *from* the assault from devils and heretics but that He would keep the Scriptures *through* that assault, and we believe that this is exactly what we see in history. God allowed periods of great assault upon the Scripture, especially during the first three centuries after the apostles. It was during this age that the heretical Alexandrian text was created, but it did not succeed in taking over the apostolic text and was effectively put on a shelf, where it sat almost entirely unused thereafter. God also allowed Rome to dominate the world for many hundreds of years and during that Dark Age the free transmission of the Bible was greatly restricted and though the light was never put out, it did not shine as brightly and freely during those days. Yet in spite of the fact that the Bible had to go through that era of fierce persecution and picked up some minor corruption along the way, we believe that God brought it out of those dark times intact. He used the Reformation editors and translators to dust it off, so to speak, to perfect those few blemishes that had crept in, and to put it into print in mint condition so that it could be preached throughout the world during an amazing period of end-time missionary work, a period that has stretched to our very day. In my view, this position is in perfect conformity with the doctrine of preservation we find in Scripture.
- (c) Sturz presented another strawman when he said that God did not stipulate that the text-type with the most copies would be the best text. We agree that God did not stipulate that and we don’t know of any King James defender who has made such a claim. Certainly John Burgon and Edward Hills did not, and these are the men Sturz was critiquing. Burgon used a seven-fold test to determine the genuineness of Scripture within the manuscript record

(antiquity, consent of witnesses, variety of evidence, respectability of witnesses, continuity, context, internal considerations). Hills taught that the preserved text is not a mere majority text but that the testimony of the majority of Greek manuscripts is only the starting place for determining the apostolic text. He showed that the Reformation editors, while revering the traditional or majority Greek text, also looked to the witness of ancient versions and that they understood the importance of Latin as a witness.

- (3) Sturz said the variety among the Byzantine or traditional Greek manuscripts disproves the doctrine that makes preservation the consequence of inspiration. "... the theory is on shaky ground due to the fact that even the Byzantine text with its high degree of homogeneity is composite..." (p. 39).
  - (a) No one denies that such a variety exists, but this does not overthrow the doctrine of preservation as a consequence of inspiration. The doctrine of preservation is not that every Scripture manuscript would be as infallible as the original but that the infallible text would not be destroyed or lost.
  - (b) The doctrine of preservation teaches us that the infallible Scripture is recoverable, discernable within the manuscript record. This was what the Reformation editors believed, and when they published the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament they were confident that they had recovered the infallible text from the manuscript record.
  - (c) The vast majority of "varieties" within the traditional text manuscripts are of the nature of obvious scribal errors and these are not difficult to detect and correct. It is not rocket science, when comparing manuscripts, to know that a misspelled word is a misspelled word or that an accidentally omitted line is an omitted line.
- (4) Sturz made the mistake common to textual critics in that he claimed that the Bible does not tell us *how* God would preserve His Word. Sturz quoted Hills, "God must preserve this text, not secretly, not hidden away ... but openly before the eyes of all men through the continuous usage of His Church," and then asked, "Where is the proof of this necessity upon God?"
  - (a) The proof of Hills' assertion is found throughout the New Testament. It is found in Christ's Great Commission, in which He instructed the churches to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth and to establish believers until the end of the age in the "all things" that He has commanded (Mat. 28:19-20). It is found in the book of Acts and in the Epistles, wherein we see the apostles carrying out these exact instructions. This is the "how" of preservation in the church age. In the Old Testament dispensation, God used the Jews to preserve His Word (Rom. 3:1-2). In the New Testament dispensation, God

uses the churches in the context of the Great Commission. This is a doctrine that is as clearly taught as anything in the Bible, but it is entirely overlooked by modern textual critics.

- (b) To claim, as modern textual criticism does, that the alleged purest New Testament text (the Alexandrian) was rejected for 1,500 years of church history and that a corrupt recension of the Scripture (the Traditional Reformation text) was promulgated in the churches during that era and that the purest Scripture was kept locked away in a couple of strange and remote monasteries and in the Pope's library and not "recovered" until the 19th century, is not ANY KIND OF preservation! Such a position has no practicality whatsoever. If God did promise to preserve His Word, such a position is ridiculous upon its very face. I admit that there are questions that I cannot answer in regard to the position I hold on preservation, but the problems I have are AS NOTHING when compared to those of the textual critic.
- e. In contrast to the rationalistic position of modern textual criticism, even in its more benign Majority Text form, we commend the faith position of Edward F. Hills.
  - (1) Dr. Hills followed in the footsteps of men like John Burgon but he also broke new ground in the 1950s when he began writing on the subject of the Bible's text. He had a doctorate in textual criticism from Harvard, yet he rejected the skeptical premises of textual criticism and set out to establish his principles strictly upon the Word of God and to walk by faith even if that meant going against the entire field of modern textual criticism. And it did!
  - (2) As a result he was held up to ridicule by textual critics (those few who have given him the time of day), but he was willing to bear that reproach. For a man with his intelligence and credentials, that is a rare and commendable characteristic. He was more desirous of hearing the "well done, good and faithful servant" from the lips of his Saviour than to bask in the praise of men in this present world. He trembled more at the words of God than at the reprobation of the scholars.
  - (3) Hills understood that the philosophy of modern textual criticism is antagonistic to the principle of faith and that if left unchallenged it will always overthrow faith eventually. He carefully documented the intimate association between so-called higher and lower criticism, between theological modernism and modern textual criticism. (For that groundbreaking work alone he should be commended by men like Pickering who claim to believe the Bible.)

Consider the following important statements from Hills' pen:

- (a) “For in the realm of New Testament textual criticism as well as in other fields the presuppositions of modern thought are hostile to the historic Christian faith and will destroy it if their fatal operation is not checked. IF FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS, THEREFORE, WOULD DEFEND THEIR SACRED RELIGION AGAINST THIS DANGER, THEY MUST FORSAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF UNBELIEVING THOUGHT AND BUILD UPON THEIR FAITH, a faith that rests entirely on the solid rock of holy Scripture. And when they do this in the sphere of New Testament textual criticism, THEY WILL FIND THEMSELVES LED BACK STEP BY STEP (PERHAPS, AT FIRST, AGAINST THEIR WILLS) TO THE TEXT OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION, NAMELY, THAT FORM OF NEW TESTAMENT TEXT WHICH UNDERLIES THE KING JAMES VERSION and the other early Protestant translations” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 1).
- (b) “If we believe in the providential preservation of the New Testament text, then we must defend the Textus Receptus as well as the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek manuscripts. For the Textus Receptus is the only form in which this Traditional Text has circulated in print. TO DECLINE TO DEFEND THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS IS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT CEASED WITH THE INVENTION OF PRINTING. It is to suppose that God, having preserved a pure New Testament text all during the manuscript period, unaccountably left this pure text hiding in the manuscripts and allowed an inferior text to issue from the printing press and circulate among His people for more than 450 years” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 192).
- (4) Thus Hills went farther than John Burgon or Frederick Scrivener, who “looked askance at the Textus Receptus and declined to defend it except in so far as it agreed with the Traditional Text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts.”
- (5) I could not agree with Dr. Hills more. I believe that the Greek Received Text that has been the missionary text for centuries is the infallible, preserved Scripture. If it cannot be said that God has put His stamp of approval upon the Hebrew Masoretic Old Testament and the Greek Received New Testament and the King James Bible in English (and other faithful translations of those texts in various languages), I don’t see how we can ever have confidence in tracing the hand of God in the providential preservation of Scripture. I am glad that the doctrine of preservation allows me to reject the Majority Text view. I’m glad that we are not still waiting for the Apostolic Text to be dug out of the heap of manuscripts through computer technology. I am glad that my *quest* is not to find the Scripture but to obey it and to fulfill its Great Commission.

## Conclusion

1. While the Majority Text claims to be a preliminary step in the refining of the alleged imperfect Received Text, we believe it is actually a step away from the preserved Word of God.
2. The men who are leading in this are not modernists. They do not deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture or hold to heretical documentary theories (at least, to our knowledge), but this does not mean they are correct in their views. Actually, the very fact that the editors and consultants for *The Majority Text* are men who believe in biblical inerrancy makes their work even more dangerous. It is much more difficult to convince God's people of the error of good men than to convince them of the error of bad ones!
3. For a more extensive study on the Majority Text see "When the KJV Departs from the 'Majority' Text: A New Twist in the Continuing Attack on the Authorized Version" by Jack Moorman. This 154 page book is available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

## REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART IX. WE HOLD TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE BECAUSE WE REJECT THE HODGES-FARSTAD MAJORITY TEXT APPROACH

1. What are the two challenges today to the Reformed Received Greek Text?
2. The Majority Text is an attempt to go back to what?
3. Historically, the term Majority Text was a ----- for the Received Text.
4. What are four major places in the New Testament where the Received Text is not supported by the majority of surviving Greek manuscripts?
5. What are the two editions of the "Majority Text" currently in print?
6. Jay Green lists how many places where he believes the "majority text" readings should replace those in the Received Text?
7. What is the first reason why the Hodges-Farstad Majority text is mythical?
8. Kurt Aland said the main problem of NT textual criticism lies in the fact that "little more than their ----- is known of most of the manuscripts."
9. How much regard did von Soden show toward the Received Text?
10. Why are Received Text defenders only getting a few scraps from the table from the standard textual sources?
11. Why are modern textual critics not in a hurry to analyze the majority of surviving Greek manuscripts?
12. What percentage of manuscripts are on microfilm at the Institute for New Testament Research in Munster, Germany?
13. Are the scholars at this Institute currently collating all of the surviving Greek manuscripts?
14. Herman Hoskier warned that von Soden's critical apparatus is "positively ----- with errors."

15. Frederik Wisse warned that von Soden's apparatus is ----- for a reconstruction of the text even of the manuscripts that he used.
16. Hodges and Farstad admit that "all decisions about the Majority Readings are ----- and -----."
17. Wilbur Pickering claims that we are "presenting ----- to specify the ----- wording of the original text."
18. Why is the "Majority Text" an insufficient text?
19. What are the four witnesses to the original text of Scripture?
20. The authors of the Westminster Confession of 1648 voiced the confidence of that entire Reformation era that the Scriptures had been "kept ---- in all ages."
21. What Hebrew and Greek texts was the Westminster Confession referring to?
22. According to the editors, the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is "both ----- and -----."
23. Wilbur Pickering calls the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text "an excellent ----- Greek Text."
24. Maurice Robinson is on a "----- toward the goal of establishing the original text."
25. What are two ways that the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text is inconsistent?
26. Why did John Burgon say that the genealogical method is moonshine?
27. John Burgon said that notions of probability are "the very ---- of those departments of science which admit of an appeal to fact."
28. What verse says the devil corrupts the simplicity that is in Christ?
29. What verse says God has revealed the truth to babes and hidden it from the wise?
30. What verse says God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise?
31. There is a danger that the Majority Text position will give students "an ---- for modern textual criticism."
32. Where did the Lord Jesus Christ teach that the preservation of Scripture extends even to the jots and tittles?
33. What verse promises that the words of Jesus will not pass away?
34. What passage in Matthew describes the method or process of preservation in the church age?
35. How do we know that the Scriptures have not been preserved in this age by being hidden away in the sands of Egypt?
36. Why was the Latin important to Bible preservation during the pre-Reformation times?
37. When we speak of the importance of Latin as a witness to the apostolic text, are we talking about Rome's Latin vulgate?
38. What verse says that faithful in the churches are to teach the same things from generation to generation?
39. Does the Bible merely infer that God will preserve the Scriptures?
40. Why were the terms "Received Text," "Byzantine Text," and "Majority Text" used synonymously for so many hundreds of years?
41. What verse says faith comes by hearing God's Word?
42. What verse says faith is the evidence of things not seen?
43. The majority of varieties within the traditional text manuscripts are of what nature?
44. What kind of preservation would it be if God allowed the purest text of the New Testament to be hidden away for 1,500 years of church history?

45. In what decade with Edward F. Hills publish his first book defending the King James Bible?
46. From what school did Hills have a doctorate in textual criticism?
47. Edward Hills said that faithful Christians must forsake the foundations of unbelieving modern textual criticism and build upon their faith. He said if they do this, “they will find themselves led back step by step” to what text?

## **X. WE HOLD TO THE KJV BECAUSE OF THE EVIL FRUIT OF THE MODERN VERSIONS.**

“Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matthew 7:20

### **Section Summary**

1. Warnings given in the 19th century about the evil fruit of modern textual criticism and the modern versions
2. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of uncertainty and confusion.
3. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of the “the tyranny of the experts.”
4. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of the decline in the authority of the Scriptures.
5. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of ecumenism.
6. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of carelessness.
7. The modern texts and versions have given ammunition to the enemies of the Bible.
8. The modern texts and versions have produced the fruit of theological modernism.

### **WARNINGS GIVEN IN THE 19TH CENTURY ABOUT THE EVIL FRUIT OF MODERN TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE MODERN VERSIONS**

As the 19th century unfolded, the call for a revision of the Greek Received Text and the English Authorized Version grew in intensity from scholarly circles. In opposition to this call for revision was a bold defense of the TR-KJV. We have documented this in our book *For Love of the Bible: The Battle for the Received Text and the King James Bible from 1800 to Present*, which is available from Way of Life Literature. It is instructive to look back on this debate and to consider the warnings that were made by those who opposed revision. In light of what has happened in the field of Bible texts and versions and in Christianity at large in the past 100 years, it is evident that these warnings were prophetic. We will begin with a quote from the 17th century. Even then some Roman Catholics were trying to undermine the integrity of the Scriptures, which they called “the Protestant’s Paper Pope,” by way of an emerging textual criticism, and they were answered by men such as Francis Turretin.

1. FRANCIS TURRETIN (1623-87), Reformed Protestant leader and theologian, understood the evil that would follow if men were not assured of the “unimpaired integrity” of the Scriptures. In his day the Roman Catholic Church and atheists were attempting to undermine the Bible on much the same grounds that modern textual criticism does today. The Greek text was questioned on the basis of textual varieties and the Hebrew was questioned on the basis of the Septuagint. In his three-volume *Institutio Theologicae Elencticae (Summary of Refutational Theology)*, which was completed in 1674 and published in 1679, 1682, and 1685, Turretin gave this warning:

“Unless unimpaired integrity characterize the Scriptures, they could not be regarded as



the sole rule of faith and practice, and the door would be thrown wide open to atheists, libertines, enthusiasts and other profane persons like them for destroying its authenticity and overthrowing the foundation of salvation. For since nothing false can be an object of faith, how can the Scriptures be held as authentic and reckoned divine if liable to contradictions and corruptions? Nor can it be said that these corruptions are only in smaller things which do not affect the foundation of faith. For if once the authenticity of the Scriptures is taken away (which would result even from the incurable corruption of one passage), how could our faith rest on what remains? *AND IF CORRUPTION IS ADMITTED IN THOSE OF LESSER IMPORTANCE, WHY NOT IN OTHERS OF GREATER? WHO COULD ASSURE ME THAT NO ERROR OR BLEMISH HAD CREPT INTO FUNDAMENTAL PASSAGES?* Or what reply could be given to a subtle atheist or heretic who should pertinaciously assert that this or that passage less in his favor had been corrupted? *IT WILL NOT DO TO SAY THAT DIVINE PROVIDENCE WISHED TO KEEP IT FREE FROM SERIOUS CORRUPTIONS, BUT NOT FROM MINOR.* For besides the fact that this is gratuitous, it cannot be held without injury, as if lacking in the necessary things which are required for the full credibility of Scripture itself. Nor can we readily believe that God, who dictated and inspired each and every word to these inspired men, would not take care of their entire preservation. If men use the utmost care diligently to preserve their words, especially if they are of any importance, as for example a testament or contract, in order that it may not be corrupted, how much more, must we suppose, would God take care of his word which he intended as a testament and seal of his covenant with us, so that it might not be corrupted; especially when he could easily foresee and prevent such corruptions in order to establish the faith of his church?"

2. HENRY JOHN TODD (1763-1845) AND THOMAS RENNELL (1754-1840). In 1819, Todd, chaplain to the king of England and keeper of the Archbishop of Canterbury's records, published *A Vindication of Our Authorised Translation and Translators of the Bible*. In this he quoted Thomas Rennell, Dean of Winchester, with this warning: "From either of these schemes, the bold project of a new translation, or the more specious one of a revisal of the present version of the Holy Scriptures, there can be so little gained, and may be so much hazarded, that the probable good bears no manner of proportion to *the threatened danger*. ... With regard to revision, it is of little importance that a few particles be adjusted, a few phrases polished, *if the whole fabric of that faith which was once delivered to the saints is thereby shaken to its foundation.*"

a. Rennell gave two warnings:

(1) The probable good bears no manner of proportion to the threatened danger.

(2) The revision of the Authorized Version could result in the shaking of the whole fabric of the New Testament faith.

b. This is exactly what has occurred in the years since the warning was given. We have

witnessed an explosion of such things as Unitarianism, theological Modernism, Cults, the Ecumenical back-to-Rome movement. In 1819, Christianity was divided into three major groups: the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations, and Baptists. While the Protestants and Baptists differed on some doctrinal issues, they were united in such major points of the faith as the Deity of Christ, salvation by grace alone, and the inerrancy of Scripture, and they were united in their belief that the Roman Catholic Church is apostate. This is no longer true. The whole fabric of the faith has indeed been shaken to its foundation.

3. JOHN JEBB, Bishop of Limerick, gave the following warning in 1829: “But I humbly conceive that, in the present days of unsettlement and appetency after change, the only safety lies in keeping things as they are. We have not hitherto indeed had any great encouragement from the revisionary labours even of our first scholars and divines. Looking around me in the present day, I see much to fear, and little to hope; for one trifling error corrected I doubt we should have ten worse introduced; while, in point of style, from everything that has appeared of late years, I am obliged to think we should be infinitely losers” (*Life of John Jebb*, II, p. 454).

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- a. Jebb warned that for every small error corrected ten worse would be introduced. That is exactly what we see in the field of English translations. Each modern version has claimed to be an improvement over the King James, a replacement for the “antiquated language,” but for every truly antiquated word that has been modernized (assuming that they need to be modernized) and for every alleged improvement that has been made, many more than 10 textual and translational errors have been introduced.
- b. Jebb also warned that the style of the new versions would be much inferior to that of the King James. That is exactly what we see. Not one of the modern versions that have appeared in the past 123 years has come up to the hem of the Authorized Version’s garments in textual purity, accuracy of translation, or linguistic style.

4. In 1857 ALEXANDER M’CAUL published *Reasons for Holding Fast* [to the Authorized Version]. He warned: “The changing of these words would establish a principle, that words not intelligible to the general reader must be changed for others more easily understood. And then a great many and important words must be removed. The possibility of having our theological language and therefore our theology changed (as might be the case), makes us rather satisfied to hold fast what we have than to run the risk of emendations of so sweeping a character. ... The last reason which may be urged for holding fast the authorized version is, that the advocates for revision propose not only to change our existing translation, but also the adoption of some improved Text of the originals. ... All the other perils are as nothing compared with the alteration of the original texts. Everybody knows that, in the New Testament especially, there are some texts affecting the very foundations of our faith, others affecting the controversies between High Church and Low Church, which are subjects of debate. ... But let these passages be changed, and the weight of church authority is at once thrown into the scale; and a doubtful,

mischievous reading may be put forth as the oracle of God.”

- a. M’Caul warned that a principle would be established of changing words not intelligible to the general reader. This is exactly what has happened. Claiming that the Bible must be as up to date as the morning newspaper, the translators and publishers of the modern versions have produced an endless stream of new editions; because if this principle is true and if language constantly changes, and we know that it does, the Bible must be revised continually.
- b. M’Caul warned that the principle of changing words that are not intelligible to the general reader would result in many and important words being removed. That is precisely what we see in the field of “dynamic equivalency,” which has taken the Bible version world by a storm in the last 40 years. Important words such as “justification,” “sanctification,” and “redemption” are not found in popular versions such as the TEV, the New Living Translation, and The Message. Even the “blood” is removed from key passages in the TEV and replaced with “death.”
- c. M’Caul warned most strongly about replacing the Greek Received Text with a new one. He warned that a modification of the Greek text could strike at the foundations of our faith and affect doctrinal controversies. He warned of doubtful, mischievous readings. This is precisely what the modern critical Greek text has done. It is filled with doubtful, mischievous readings gathered from Alexandria, Egypt, that hotbed of theological heresy, such as the removal or questioning of the last 12 verses of Mark and the omission of “God” in 1 Timothy 3:16. Contrary to popular opinion, a serious doctrinal issue lies at the heart of the Bible text-version debate and this has been recognized by godly men (as well as by Unitarians and Modernists and other apostates) since the beginning of the 19th century.

5. FOX MAULE RAMSAY (1801-1874), Lord Panmure of Angus, Scotland, speaking before the Edinburgh Bible Society in January 1857, warned: “We have heard in this country, and we have seen it absolutely put into practice in the United States of America, of a scheme for what is called a new version of the Bible. Now, feeling very strongly on this subject, I take this opportunity of publicly stating my opinion: *that any such scheme is FRAUGHT WITH THE UTMOST DANGER to the Protestant liberties of this country. Nay, it is fraught with danger, I believe, to the Protestant religion itself.* ... I think IT WOULD BE THE MOST DANGEROUS AND DISASTROUS THING WHICH COULD OCCUR TO THIS COUNTRY, if we were to permit those words to be tampered with which have been household words in many a pious family for upwards of three hundred years, and I hope will be household words to all the families of the world before three hundred years more are passed” (Lord Panmure, *The Witness*, January 10, 1857; cited from Edwin Bissell, *The Historic Origin of the Bible*, p. 351).

- a. Panmure called the scheme for a new version of the Bible “dangerous and disastrous” and warned that new Bible versions would be a danger to “Protestant religion itself.”

He was referring to the Anglican Church, firstly, and to other denominations, secondly. He was a prophet, for the onslaught of theological Modernism and Romanizing has destroyed the Church of England. Most other mainline Protestant denominations are in the same shape and declining church attendance is a reflection of their apostasy. Has the multiplicity of modern Bible versions had any influence on this situation? Lord Panmure thought it would.

b. Panmure did not hold the view that the King James Bible is hopelessly antiquated, wanting to see it hold its ground until the 23rd century.

6. D.H. CONRAD, in April 1856, delivered the following warning to a Bible Convention in Richmond, Virginia, regarding the proposed revision of the Authorized Bible: “(2) You open a crevasse through which you know not how soon the floods of innovation may sweep away the sacred landmarks. (3) You risk too much for a small (supposed) accuracy, for you let in the cavils of those ‘who watch for your halting.’ You will have, as allies in the undertaking, all the heresies, past, present, and to come, to say nothing of those who now hate the Bible, because it stands a solemn protest against their ideal theories” (D.H. Conrad, Esq., at a Bible Convention, *Bible Society Record*, December 1856; cited from Bissell, *Historic Origin of the Bible*, 1873, pp. 348, 349).

- a. Conrad warned that a flood of innovation would sweep away sacred landmarks. This is exactly what the modern texts and versions have done. The ancient landmark of the Traditional Greek Text, which even by Hort’s estimate was a millennium and a half old, has been swept away. Ancient landmarks such as Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37; 1 Timothy 3:16; and 1 John 5:7 are gone. The ancient landmark of one standard Bible for the entire English-speaking world has also been swept away.
- b. Conrad warned that the allies in revising the English Bible and its Greek text would be “all the heresies, past...” This is true. It was well known by informed Bible-believers of Conrad’s day that the Alexandrian text represented by the Vaticanus was a text that contains Gnostic and other heretical anti-Christ corruptions introduced in the first two centuries after the apostles.
- c. Conrad further warned that the allies in revising the old English Bible and its Greek text would be “all the heresies ... present, and to come, to say nothing of those that hate the Bible, because it stands a solemn protest against their ideal heresies.” What prophetic words! This is precisely what has happened. See “The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame” for evidence of the Unitarians, Modernists, Cultists, and other assorted heretics who have gleefully rushed in to revise the Ancient Landmarks.

7. ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER (the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury), gave this warning before the British & Foreign Bible Society in May 1856: “*Destroy that common consent to receive an*

*‘Authorized Version,’ and my belief is that you have inflicted a deadly wound on the cause of the propagation of the truth among all the nations that speak our language. ... At present we have the ‘Authorized Version,’ and we consent to receive it. We are, therefore, all on an equality; when we enter into a controversy we are on an equality; the laity can exercise the Berean privilege of examining the scriptures ‘to see whether these things be so,’ and cannot be told by those from whom they differ, ‘it may agree with your version, but I have another and a better one, and therefore, I can have no controversy with you.’* What is proposed would, if carried out, tend to destroy the exercise of private judgment—that grand, sacred, solemn principle which is the right of every man, and which I imagine to be the great security of churches and nations, and the life and soul of individuals. WHEN YOU ARE CONFUSED OR PERPLEXED BY A VARIETY OF VERSIONS YOU WOULD BE OBLIGED TO GO TO SOME LEARNED PUNDIT IN WHOM YOU REPOSED CONFIDENCE, AND ASK HIM WHICH VERSION HE RECOMMENDED; AND WHEN YOU HAD TAKEN HIS VERSION, YOU MUST BE BOUND BY HIS OPINION. *I hold this to be the greatest danger that now threatens us. It is a danger pressed upon us from Germany, and pressed upon us by the neological spirit of the age* [neology is a love of novelty for novelty’s sake]. I HOLD IT TO BE FAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN TRACTARIANISM [the back to Rome movement within the Church of England] OR POKERY, both of which I abhor from the bottom of my heart. This evil is tenfold more dangerous, tenfold more subtle than either of these, because you would be ten times more incapable of dealing with the gigantic mischief that would stand before you. ... THE CRY FOR FURTHER AMENDMENT WOULD KNOW NO END. It would be difficult to construct an impartial commission. The immense variety of opinion on doctrinal matters, and the immense diffusion of knowledge, both deep and superficial, in these days, would render necessary such a combination of members as would include the extremist forms of Ritualism, Socinianism [denial of Christ’s deity, Unitarianism], and Infidelity. Numerically and as scholars, these professors would be very strong, and experience will not allow us to believe that these learned persons, after years of thought and study in the same groove, fixed and sincere in their peculiar opinions, would not entertain (unknown to themselves no doubt) a decided bias towards special renderings of the sacred text (Lord Shaftesbury; cited from Bissell, *Historic Origin of the Bible*, p. 355).

- a. Cooper was very emphatic in his warning against replacing the Authorized Version, describing it as a “deadly wound” and a “gigantic mischief.” He warned, first, that to multiply commonly accepted Bible versions would destroy the exercise of private judgment. Instead of one accepted Bible being the ultimate authority, the authority would be the scholar, the textual critic, or the alternative version. This is precisely what has happened.
- (1) Since the average believer or even the average preacher is not competent to make textual decisions, the ultimate authority is the textual critic.
  - (2) Since there are competing Hebrew and Greek readings and texts, there is no standard authority.

- (3) In a Bible study or church or school in which the participants use a multiplicity of versions, no one can speak with final authority on a text.
- b. Cooper warned that the danger in Bible texts was from the direction of Germany and that it reflected the shallow spirit of the age that yearned after new things (“neological spirit”). Germany is precisely where modern textual criticism originated. It arose in the same place and climate as theological modernism; “higher” criticism was intimately associated with “lower” criticism. Because of the careless, non-critical, compromised, unholy spirit of the hour, because of the great dearth of the fear of God, this poison has spread far and wide in the last 100 years.
  - c. Cooper warned that the cry for revision and novelty would be endless. This is exactly what has happened. This is true for Bible translations. In the English language alone, more than 100 versions have been published and new ones are appearing each year. This is true in translation methodology. The theories and principles have been modifying continually. This is true for Greek texts. There have been dozens since that of Griesbach. There have been 27 editions of the Nestles’ text and four of the United Bible Societies’.
  - d. Cooper warned that the theological climate of the 19th century was not conducive to sound Bible textual work compared to that of the Reformation era. He warned that Unitarians, Modernists (“Infidelity”), and Romanists (the reference to Ritualism was to the Anglo-Catholic Tractarian movement of his day) would find their way into the work. What a prophecy! A Unitarian was on the committee for the English Revised Version and another one was on the American Standard Version committee and Unitarians played a key role in the development and acceptance of modern textual criticism. Romanists have also played an increasingly significant role, to the extent that one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament is a Roman Catholic Cardinal and the Roman Catholic Church has conformed its official Latin Vulgate to the standard of the critical Greek New Testament.
  - e. Cooper warned that those who are committed to heresy are biased toward special renderings of the sacred text. This, of course, is true and it is why the Scriptures admonish God’s people not to associate with heretics and apostates (2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 3:9-11). This is why the Unitarians loved the Alexandrian Greek text, because they have recognized from the beginning that it favors their heresies more than the Received Text. See “The Modern Version Hall of Shame” for documentation of this.

8. JOSEPH PHILPOT, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford, and editor of *The Gospel Standard*, gave the following warning in 1857 about a revision of the Authorized Version:

1. Who are to undertake it? ... Of course they must be learned men, great critics, scholars, and divines. *But these are notoriously either tainted with popery or infidelity.* Where are the men, learned, yet sound in Truth, not to say alive unto God, who possess the necessary qualifications for so important a work? And can erroneous men, dead in trespasses and sins, carnal, worldly, ungodly persons, spiritually translate a book written by the blessed Spirit? We have not the slightest ground for hope that they would be godly men, such as we have reason to believe translated the Scriptures into our present version.

2. Again, it would unsettle the minds of thousands, as to which was the Word of God—the old translation or the new. What a door it would open for the workings of infidelity, or the temptations of Satan! What a gloom, too, it would cast over the minds of many of God's saints, to have those passages which had been applied to their souls translated in a different way, and how it would seem to shake all their experience of the power and preciousness of God's Word!

3. But besides all this, there would be two Bibles spread throughout all the land, the old and the new, and what confusion would this create in almost every place! At present, all sects and denominations agree in acknowledging our present version as to the standard of appeal. Nothing settles disputes so soon as when the contending parties have confidence in the same umpire and are willing to abide by his decision. **But this Judge of all dispute, this Umpire of all controversy would cease to be the looser of strife if present acknowledged authority were put an end to by a rival.**

4. If the new translation were once to begin, where would it end? It is good to let well enough alone, as it is easier to mar than to mend. ... The Socinianising Neologian would blot out 'GOD' in 1 Tim. 3.16, and strike out 1 John 5.7, as an interpolation. The Puseyite would mend it to suit his Tractarian views. ... **Once set up a notice, 'The Old Bible to be mended,' and there would be plenty of workmen, who trying to mend the cover, would pull the pages to pieces.** ... All our good Bible terms would be so mutilated that they would cease to convey the Spirit's meaning and **INSTEAD OF THE NOBLE SIMPLICITY, FAITHFULNESS, AND TRUTH OF OUR PRESENT VERSION, WE SHOULD HAVE A BIBLE THAT NOBODY WOULD ACCEPT AS THE WORD OF GOD, TO WHICH NONE COULD SAFELY APPEAL, AND ON WHICH NONE IMPLICITLY RELY.** [Note: The Socinianising Neologian referred to those who denied the Deity of Jesus Christ and followed new doctrinal fads. The Puseyite and the Tractarian referred to the back to Rome movement within the Church of England.]

5. Instead of our good old Saxon Bible, simple and solid, with few words obsolete, and alike majestic and beautiful, we should have a modern English translation in pert and flippant language of the day. ...

6. The present English Bible (Authorized Version) ... is, we believe, the grand bulwark of Protestantism; the safeguard of the Gospel, and the treasure of the church; and we should be traitors in every sense of the word if we consented to give it up to *be rifled by the sacrilegious hands of the Puseyites, concealed Papists, German Neologians, infidel divines, Arminians, Socinians, and the whole tribe of enemies of God and godliness* (Joseph Charles Philpot, "The Authorized Version of

1611,” *The Gospel Standard*, April 1857; reprinted in *The Authorized Version—1611 vs. The New English Bible: a Critical Review*, Trinitarian Bible Society, 1961).

- a. Philpot warned that the biblical scholarship of the 19th century was tainted with popery and infidelity. He warned that men who are unsound in the faith could not properly translate a spiritual Book. Would that the evangelicals and fundamentalists of our day who are committed to the textual criticism of Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland had this much biblically sanctified wisdom!
- b. Philpot warned that competing versions would produce confusion and open the door to infidelity. This is exactly what has occurred.
- c. Philpot warned that the authority of the Bible would be seriously weakened because of the conflicting texts and translations. This is precisely what we see. An authoritative “thus saith the Lord” has been replaced with a feeble “older and better manuscripts read this” and “my version says so and so; what does yours say?”
- d. Philpot warned that the quest for revision would be endless. This is exactly what we see.
- e. Philpot warned that Unitarians and Romanists would modify the texts and versions to suit their doctrine, that the Unitarian would omit “God” from 1 Timothy 3:16 and the Trinitarian statement from 1 John 5:7. This is exactly what has happened. All modern texts and versions today contain these and many other doctrinal omissions, and they can be traced back to the heretics of the 2nd, 3rd, and 19th centuries.
- f. Philpot warned that the majestic language of the Authorized Version would be replaced with the “pert and flippant language of the day.” This is exactly what has happened. At first the new versions at least attempted to be literal and somewhat stately, but with each passing decade they have become more “pert and flippant.” What could better describe the dynamic equivalencies and paraphrases? The Bible Societies have described Jesus as “Action Man”; and the Living Bible has the prophet Elijah saying to the prophets of Baal, “You’ll have to shout louder than that to catch the attention of your god! Perhaps he is talking to someone, or is out sitting on the toilet...”; and in Mat. 9:34 The Message says, “The Pharisees were left sputtering, ‘Hocus Pocus. It’s nothing but Hocus Pocus’”; while translations by Wycliffe and the United Bible Societies have changed “lamb” to “seal pup” and “foxes” to “coyotes” and “fig tree” to “banana tree” and “snow” to “coconut.” Has Philpot’s warning not been fulfilled?
- g. Philpot warned that the King James Bible is the bulwark of Protestantism and that it is treachery to allow it to be revised by theological heretics. His warning was not heeded and as a result the old Text and Version has indeed been rifled by



sacrilegious hands. We have documented this in “The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame.”

## **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION**

The multiplicity of texts and versions and the “eclectic” view that the preserved Word of God is somehow mystically scattered throughout all of them and that no one authoritative choice must be allowed has resulted in increasing uncertainty and confusion.

### **1. There is uncertainty produced by the constantly shifting theories of modern textual criticism.**

#### **a. Note the following statements by prominent textual critics of the last 100 years testifying to the gross uncertainty produced by modern textual criticism.**

“[The New Testament text is more unsettled] than ever, and PERHAPS FINALLY, UNSETTLED” (Rendel Harris, *Side Lights on New Testament Research*, 1908, p. 3).

“The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE” (F.C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism*, 1910, p. 129).

“In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort and of von Soden, WE DO NOT KNOW THE ORIGINAL FORM OF THE GOSPELS, AND IT IS QUITE LIKELY THAT WE NEVER SHALL” (Kirsopp Lake, *Family 13, The Ferrar Group*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, p. vii).

“... it is generally recognized that THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE BIBLE CANNOT BE RECOVERED” (Robert M. Grant, “The Bible of Theophilus of Antioch,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 66, 1947, p. 173).

“The textual history that the Westcott-Hort text represents is no longer tenable in the light of newer discoveries and fuller textual analysis. In the effort to construct a congruent history, our failure suggests that WE HAVE LOST THE WAY, that WE HAVE REACHED A DEAD END, and that only a new and different insight will enable us to break through” (Kenneth Clark, “Today’s Problems,” *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, edited by Parvis and Wikgren, 1950, pp. 161, 162).

“...the optimism of the earlier editors has given way to that SKEPTICISM WHICH INCLINES TOWARDS REGARDING ‘THE ORIGINAL TEXT’ AS AN UNATTAINABLE MIRAGE” (G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 1953, p. 9).

“In general, THE WHOLE THING IS LIMITED TO PROBABILITY JUDGMENTS; the original text of the New Testament, according to its nature, must be and remain A HYPOTHESIS” (H. Greeven, *Der Urtext des Neuen Testaments*, 1960, p. 20; cited from Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, p. 67).

“It should naturally be understood that this text is a working text (in the sense of the century-long Nestle tradition); IT IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS DEFINITIVE, but as a stimulus to further efforts towards redefining and verifying the text of the New Testament” (Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece Cum Apparatu Critico Curavit*, Introduction, 24th edition, 1960).

“The primary goal of New Testament textual study remains the recovery of what the New Testament writers wrote. We have already suggested that TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL IS WELL NIGH IMPOSSIBLE. Therefore we must be content with what Reinhold Niebuhr and others have called, in other contexts, AN ‘IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBILITY’” (R.M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, 1963, p. 51).

“... the papyrus vividly portrays a fluid state of the text at about A.D. 200. Such a scribal freedom suggests that the gospel text was little more stable than the oral tradition, and that WE MAY BE PURSUING THE RETREATING MIRAGE OF THE ‘ORIGINAL TEXT.’ ... Great progress has been achieved in recovering an early form of text, but IT MAY BE DOUBTED THAT THERE IS EVIDENCE OF ONE ORIGINAL TEXT TO BE RECOVERED” (Kenneth Clark, “The Theological Relevance of Textual Variation in Current Criticism of the Greek New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 85, 1966, pp. 15, 16).

“... every textual critic knows that this similarity of text indicates, rather, that WE HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS IN TEXTUAL THEORY SINCE WESTCOTT-HORT; THAT WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE A DEFINITIVE DETERMINATION AS TO WHAT THE BEST TEXT IS; THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE TRANSMISSION AND ALTERNATION OF THE TEXT IN THE FIRST FEW CENTURIES; and, accordingly, that the Westcott-Hort kind of text has maintained its dominant position largely by default” (Eldon J. Epp, “The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 43, 1974, pp. 390-391).

“Since Lachmann, and especially since Westcott and Hort, New Testament textual critics have attempted to find objective criteria for establishing the text, BUT

WITHOUT ACHIEVING SUCCESS. ... Clearly, despite all efforts, a CONSIDERABLE ELEMENT OF SUBJECTIVITY is always involved” (Barbara Aland, *A Century of New Testament Textual Criticism 1898-1998*, <http://www.bibleresourcecenter.org/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=BF4714BC-53F6-48EB-94FEA6BF73FD88A5&method=display>).

“As New Testament textual criticism moves into the twenty-first century, it must shed whatever remains of its innocence, for nothing is simple anymore. Modernity may have led many to assume that a straightforward goal of reaching a single original text of the New Testament--or even a text as close as possible to that original--was achievable. Now, however, REALITY AND MATURITY REQUIRE THAT TEXTUAL CRITICISM FACE UNSETTLING FACTS, CHIEF AMONG THEM THAT THE TERM ‘ORIGINAL’ HAS EXPLODED INTO A COMPLEX AND HIGHLY UNMANAGEABLE MULTIVALENT ENTITY. Whatever tidy boundaries textual criticism may have presumed in the past have now been shattered, and its parameters have moved markedly not only to the rear and toward the front, but also sideways, as fresh dimensions of originality emerge from behind the variant readings and from other manuscript phenomena” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ in New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

- b. **In 1966 Kurt Aland restored seven important portions in Luke 24 that had previously been omitted in the Nestle’s Text.** These were Luke 24:3 -- “of the Lord Jesus”; Luke 24:6 -- “he is not here but is risen”; Luke 24:12 -- whole verse; Luke 24:36 -- “and saith unto them, Peace be unto you”; Luke 24:40 -- “And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet”; Luke 24:51 -- “and was carried up into heaven”; Luke 24:52 -- “worshipped him.” These pieces of Scripture had been omitted from the Nestle Text because they are not found in the Greek Codex D and in some copies of the Old Latin and “Old Syriac,” but after they were discovered in papyrus 75 they were restored to the New Testament. Edward F. Hills observes: “... this rapid shifting of opinion shows us how untrustworthy naturalistic textual criticism is. Christians who rely upon it for their knowledge of the New Testament text are to be pitied. SURELY THEY ARE BUILDING THEIR HOUSE UPON THE SANDS” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 125).
- c. **The 3rd edition of the UBS Greek New Testament made hundreds of changes in the text.** “In fact, even the same scholars will vacillate, as demonstrated by the ‘more than five hundred changes’ introduced into the third edition of the Greek text produced by the United Bible Societies as compared with the second edition (the

same committee of five editors prepared both). Further, it is evident that the maxims above cannot be applied with certainty. ... It thus appears that in the space of three years (1968-71), with no significant accretion of new evidence, the same group of five scholars changed their mind in over five hundred places. IT IS HARD TO RESIST THE SUSPICION THAT THEY ARE GUESSING. No one living today knows or can know what actually happened. It follows that SO LONG AS THE TEXTUAL MATERIALS ARE HANDLED IN THIS WAY WE WILL NEVER BE SURE ABOUT THE PRECISE WORDING OF THE GREEK TEXT” (Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, 1977, Introduction).

**d. Kurt and Barbara Aland compared seven editions of the critical Greek New Testament from the past 100 years** (Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, von Soden, Vogels, Merk, Bover, and Nestle-Aland) to see how much they are in agreement. In the Gospels only 54.5% of the verses agree together across all seven editions. (Verses in which any one of the seven editions differs by a single word are not counted.) THIS MEANS THAT ALMOST HALF OF THE VERSES CONTAIN VARIANTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN SETTLED IN THE MODERN GREEK TEXTS. Over the entire New Testament the percentage of agreement is 62.9%. Thus, the principles of modern textual criticism are so non-absolute that almost 40% of the New Testament verses contain readings that vary among the critical texts. See Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 1995, p. 29.

**e. The following quotes show that all of the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort are being debunked by contemporary textual critics:**

“We still live in the world of Westcott and Hort with our conception of different recensions and text-types, although THIS CONCEPTION HAS LOST ITS *RAISON D’ETRE*, OR, IT NEEDS AT LEAST TO BE NEWLY AND CONVINCINGLY DEMONSTRATED. For, the increase of the documentary evidence and the entirely new areas of research which were opened to us on the discovery of the papyri, mean THE END OF WESTCOTT AND HORT’S CONCEPTION” (Kurt Aland, *The Significance of the Papyri*, pp. 334-37; cited from Wilbur Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle that the Bible can be treated as a secular book:* “The difference between sacred writings in constant popular and ecclesiastical use and the work of a classical author has never been sufficiently emphasized in the textual criticism of the New Testament. PRINCIPLES VALID FOR THE TEXTUAL RESTORATION OF PLATO OR ARISTOTLE CANNOT BE APPLIED TO SACRED TEXTS SUCH AS THE GOSPELS (OR THE PAULINE EPISTLES). We cannot assume that it is possible by a sifting of ‘scribal errors’ to arrive at the prototype or autograph text of the Biblical

writer” (Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 1946, p. 214).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle that the New Testament manuscripts were not intentionally corrupted by heretics:* “THE MAJORITY OF THE VARIANT READINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE CREATED FOR THEOLOGICAL OR DOGMATIC REASONS. Most of the manuals and handbooks now in print (including mine!) will tell you that these variations were the fruit of careless treatment which was possible because the books of the New Testament had not yet attained a strong position as ‘Bible.’ THE REVERSE IS THE CASE” (Ernest Colwell, *What Is the Best New Testament*, 1952, p. 53).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle of the genealogical method:* “Many years ago I joined others in pointing out the limitations in Hort’s use of genealogy, and THE INAPPLICABILITY OF GENEALOGICAL METHOD--STRICTLY DEFINED--TO THE TEXTUAL CRITICISM of the NT. Since then many others have assented to this criticism, and the building of family trees is only rarely attempted. ... Hort’s brilliant work still captivates our minds. So when confronted by a reading whose support is minimal and widely divorced in time and place, we think first and only of genealogical relationships. HORT HAS PUT GENEALOGICAL BLINDERS ON OUR EYES” (Ernest Colwell, *What Is the Best New Testament*, 1952, pp. 370-71).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle of text types:* “It is still customary to divide manuscripts into the four well-known families: the Alexandrian, the Caesarean, the Western and the Byzantine. THIS CLASSICAL DIVISION CAN NO LONGER BE MAINTAINED” (Albertus Klijn, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospels and Acts*, 1969; cited from Wilbur Pickering, *The Identify of the New Testament Text*).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle of Conjectural Emendation:* “[CONJECTURAL EMENDATION IS] A PROCESS PRECARIOUS IN THE EXTREME AND SELDOM ALLOWING ANYONE BUT THE GUESSER TO FEEL CONFIDENCE IN THE TRUTH OF ITS RESULTS” (Frederic Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., 1926, p. 3).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle of Intrinsic and Transcriptional Probability:* “Unfortunately THESE TWO CRITERIA FREQUENTLY CLASH IN A HEAD -ON COLLISION, because ancient scribes as well as modern editors often preferred the reading which best fits the context” (Ernest Colwell, *The Origin of Texttypes of New Testament Manuscripts*, 1961, p. 37).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle that the Shorter Reading Is Preferable to the Longer:*

“This may be true of some of the local texts of the second century; it is the very opposite of the truth where scribes or editors trained in the tradition of Alexandrian textual criticism are concerned. ... THE NOTION IS COMPLETELY REFUTED THAT THE REGULAR TENDENCY OF SCRIBES WAS TO CHOOSE THE LONGER READING... The whole question of interpolations in ancient MSS has been set in an entirely new light by the researches of Mr. A.C. Clark, Corpus Professor of Latin at Oxford. ... in *The Descent of Manuscripts*, an investigation of the manuscript tradition of the Greek and Latin Classics, HE PROVES CONCLUSIVELY THAT THE ERROR TO WHICH SCRIBES WERE MOST PRONE WAS NOT INTERPOLATION BUT ACCIDENTAL OMISSION” (B.H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, 1930). “On reflection we do not seem able to find any reason for thinking that the maxim *lectio brevior potior* really holds good” (G.D. Kilpatrick, “The Greek New Testament Text of Today and the Textus Receptus,” *The New Testament in Historical and Contemporary Perspective*, edited by H. Anderson and William Barclay, 1965, p. 196).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle that one can determine readings based on a sense of style:* “Hort’s sense of style, his idea of what was correct and preferable in every alternative, was acquired from a close acquaintance with his ‘neutral’ text. It did not occur to him that most of its formal aspects tallied with his standards just because these were taken from his model [Vaticanus]. So far HIS DECISIONS ARE IN THE NATURE OF A VICIOUS CIRCLE. We today who live outside this magic circle, which kept a generation spellbound, are able to see through Hort’s illustration” (P. Walters, *The Text of the Septuagint: Its Corruptions and Their Emendation*, 1973, edited by D.W. Gooding; cited from Wilbur Pickering, p. 21).

*The Westcott-Hort Principle of a Lucian or Syrian Recension:* “The same argument tells against any theory of a deliberate revision at any definite moment. We know the names of several revisers of the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and IT WOULD BE STRANGE IF HISTORIANS AND CHURCH WRITERS HAD ALL OMITTED TO RECORD OR MENTION SUCH AN EVENT AS THE DELIBERATE REVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IN ITS ORIGINAL GREEK” (Frederic Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 324-25). “This papyrus [p75] marked another revolution in our understanding of how the New Testament text developed: its text proved to be so close to that of Codex Vaticanus (B) that THE THEORY OF RECENSIONS, I.E., OF THOROUGHGOING REVISIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT MADE IN THE FOURTH CENTURY, WAS NO LONGER DEFENSIBLE. One of the main pillars supporting the dominant theory of New Testament textual history was now demolished” (Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 87).

“.... it is probably fair to say that NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM HAS NEVER EXPERIENCED SO MANY FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERING THEORIES and such a great variety of views on the history of the text” (Jacobus Petzer, “The History of the New Testament Text,” *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by Barbara Aland and Joel Delobel, 1994, p. 14).

- f. **It is evident from these quotes and from many others that could be given that the situation in the field of modern textual criticism is similar to that of Darwinian evolution.** While many of the chief principles of Darwin and his early followers have been refuted or seriously challenged, such as the theory that life could spontaneously arise or that natural selection could account for life as we know it or that man descended from apes or that a steady and gradual progression of life can be discerned from the fossil record, the superstructure of Darwinian evolution remains strangely unshaken. Likewise, modern textual criticism in the 20th and 21st centuries sits firmly upon the foundation laid by its architects of the 19th century, and even as the foundational principles have been disproved (e.g., a Lucian Recension, the existence of a neutral text, the reliability of intrinsic and transcriptional probability, the soundness of the genealogical method) the superstructure remains largely but strangely unshaken. In the case of Darwinian evolution, the chief thing that was rejected in the beginning was the doctrine of a Creator, and regardless of how devastatingly the foundational principles of Darwinian evolution are disproved, contemporary adherents of evolution refuse to reconsider the doctrine of a Creator. In the case of modern textual criticism, the chief thing that was rejected by Westcott and Hort and other early proponents was the Greek Received Text, and regardless of how the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been refuted even by textual critics in the past 100 years, the children of Westcott and Hort refuse to take a new look at the Received Text. The reason is that the adherents of both disciplines refuse to admit that they must approach these subjects by faith in God and by faith alone, that they can never know the truth about creation or the Bible apart from faith in the divine revelation. Any other foundation is shifting sand.

**2. There is uncertainty produced by the multiplicity of Hebrew and Greek texts.** Because of modern textual criticism, the certainty and dogmatism of a settled biblical text has been replaced with the uncertainty of conflicting texts. The Bible student today, with his favorite textual apparatus, is his own authority, picking and choosing between readings like a diner picks and chooses between food types at a cafeteria. A.T. Robertson, in *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, plainly stated that this is the goal: “The aim of this present volume is to put the modern student in possession of their principles of textual criticism so that he can apply them himself to each problem in detail and SO BE ABLE TO MAKE HIS OWN TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT” (Robertson, p. 38).

a. This uncertainty is true for the New Testament.

- (1) Earlier in these studies we saw that the Westcott and Hort principles that popularized the critical Greek text in 1881 have undergone continual modification throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, and the Greek Testament based on those theories has also continually evolved, with a subsequent change in the translations based on it. The 3rd edition of the UBS Greek New Testament differed from the 2nd edition three years earlier in more than 500 places, and the same five textual critics made those changes.
- (2) The United Bible Societies Greek New Testament illustrates the uncertainty and confusion that continues to arise from the modern texts and versions.
  - (a) It features graded evaluations for each textual variant in the UBS Greek New Testament. Under this scheme the variants are rated A, B, C, or D, depending upon the relative “certainty” of a reading. Such a scheme is confusing and doubt-producing upon its very face.
  - (b) Yet the real situation is even more confusing and uncertain. In spite of the alleged certainty of the “A” readings, Kurt and Barbara Aland, two of the editors of the UBS Greek New Testament, admit that “the new text itself is not a static entity ... every change in it is open to challenge” (*The Text of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, p. 35).
  - (c) Bruce Metzger further admits that the editors “have attached a high degree of probability to readings which others consider much more doubtful or would even reject altogether” (Metzger quoted by J.M. Ross, “The United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Languages*, 95, 1976, pp. 117-18). Thus, if the truth were to be told, the critical apparatus would be vastly expanded with thousands of additional notes to give the alternative readings and ratings of other prominent textual critics.
- (3) Thus, the modern Bible translator is not given a New Testament to translate; he is given thousands of variants from which he is expected and encouraged to construct his own Bible. How the doctrine of divine verbal inspiration can be maintained in the face of this confusion has never been explained. The Metzgers and Alands in this field have no concern for such a question for the very reason that they do not believe in verbal inspiration; but we are left to wonder greatly about those who claim to be fundamentalists and yet adopt the “eclectic” approach to the biblical text. A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield fled to the “the original autographs,” but as the autographs do not exist, that position is of no practical benefit to God’s people today and leaves more questions unanswered than answered. What the textual critic (whether he be a modernist, an evangelical, or a fundamentalist) has neglected from the very start, so that he



ends up in this confusion, is *the key to the whole affair, which is faith in God and in His divine promises*.

4. David Sorenson, a third generation fundamental Baptist pastor who was educated at Pillsbury Baptist Bible College and Central Baptist Theological Seminary (Master of Divinity, 1972), describes the confusion and uncertainty that attends modern textual criticism. He accepted modern textual criticism in the earlier days of his ministry and of those days he writes: “Rather than building faith, the endless minutia and disagreement over variants in the critical text lead to doubt and tend to shake one’s faith in the integrity of the Word of God. As this writer in years past waded through the arguments, both pro and con, over a given variant reading, he came away shaking his head wondering what was the true reading. Yet, the very nature of the critical text and its attempt to ‘reconstruct’ the Word of God lends itself to such doubts. Is God the author of confusion?” (Sorenson, *Touch Not the Unclean Thing*, p. 65).

b. This uncertainty is also true for the Old Testament.

- (1) With the introduction of textual theories whereby the Hebrew Masoretic text was dethroned, the Old Testament has undergone continual revision on the basis of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Greek Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Targums, the Symmachus and Theodotion Greek translations, and other sources. These are the sources listed in the Preface to the 1978 New International Version as the basis for the O.T. translation (pp. viii, xi). Dr. Donald Waite observes: “The NIV editors have very honestly and very boldly altered the foundations of our Old Testament text in the above fifteen DIFFERENT WAYS, whenever it suited their fancy! You don’t know at what point they’ve used one document to contradict the Masoretic Hebrew text, and at what point they used another document” (Waite, *Defending the King James Bible*).
- (2) According to Dr. Waite’s calculations, the 1937 Hebrew text by Rudolph Kittel (*Biblia Hebraica*) and the 1977 Stuttgart edition of the Hebrew Old Testament (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) contain footnotes listing some 20,000 to 30,000 textual changes.
- (3) Even the New King James Bible, which professes to follow the same textual foundation as the King James Bible, follows instead an eclectic Old Testament, modifying the Hebrew Masoretic with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, “a variety of ancient versions,” and the Dead Sea Scrolls (New King James Bible, preface).
- (4) As with the New Testament, those who are doing the revision of the Old

Testament do not agree in their principles or their conclusions. Consider one area of O.T. textual evidence, that of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first batch of these was discovered in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947, with subsequent finds in nearby caves. The first finds supported the Masoretic text but subsequent finds have unearthed a variety of O.T. text types that differ from the Masoretic. Textual scholars do not agree on many important points touching these manuscripts, not even as to their date. G.R. Driver (1965) disagreed with Burrows, Albright, and Cross, claiming that the Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the first two centuries A.D., rather than B.C. (F.F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1956). The very title of this book exposes the fact that the textual scholars disagree and that their conclusions are in continual flux.

**3. There is uncertainty produced by the marginal notes in the modern versions that feature a bewildering variety of textual possibilities and that cast serious doubt upon the readings adopted in the text.** This began with the English Revised Version of 1881, which was the first standard English translation based on a different Greek text and the first to fill its margin with notes referring to a wide variety of alternate readings. The translators said that this was necessary because “for the present, it would not be safe to accept one Reading to the absolute exclusion of others” (ERV New Testament, 1881, Preface, p. xiv).

a. John Burgon observed the destructive nature of these notes:

(1) Note his warnings:

- (a) “Especially do we deprecate the introduction into the margin of all this strange lore, because we insist on behalf of unlearned persons that they ought not to be molested with information which cannot, by possibility, be of the slightest service to them: with vague statements about ‘ancient authorities,’--of the importance, or unimportance, of which they know absolutely nothing, nor indeed ever can know. Unlearned readers on taking the Revision into their hands, (i.e. at least 999 readers out of 1000) will never be aware whether these (so-called) ‘Various Readings’ are to be scornfully scouted, as nothing else but ancient perversions of the Truth; or else are to be lovingly cherished, as ‘alternative’ [see the Revisers’ Preface (iii. 1)] exhibitions of the inspired Verity,--TO THEIR OWN ABIDING PERPLEXITY AND INFINITE DISTRESS. UNDENIABLE AT ALL EVENTS IT IS, THAT THE EFFECT WHICH THESE EVER-RECURRING ANNOUNCEMENTS PRODUCE ON THE DEVOUT READER OF SCRIPTURE IS THE REVERSE OF EDIFYING: IS NEVER HELPFUL: IS ALWAYS BEWILDERING” (Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 1883, pp. 4, 5).
- (b) “It becomes evident that, by this ill-advised proceeding, our Revisionists would convert every Englishman’s copy of the New Testament into a one-sided Introduction to the Critical difficulties of the Greek Text; a labyrinth,

out of which they have not been at the pains to supply him with a single hint as to how he may find his way. On the contrary. By candidly avowing that they find themselves enveloped in the same Stygian darkness with the ordinary English Reader, they give him to understand that there is absolutely no escape from the difficulty. WHAT ELSE MUST BE THE RESULT OF ALL THIS BUT GENERAL UNCERTAINTY, CONFUSION, DISTRESS? A HAZY MISTRUST OF ALL SCRIPTURE HAS BEEN INSINUATED INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF COUNTLESS MILLIONS, WHO IN THIS WAY HAVE BEEN *FORCED* TO BECOME DOUBTERS,--YES, DOUBTERS IN THE TRUTH OF REVELATION ITSELF” (Burton, *The Revision Revised*, pp. 236, 237).

- (2) This is exactly what has happened in the last 130 years as the marginal notes and the versions have increased to a bewildering degree.
- b. Dr. Donald Waite, founder and director of Bible for Today ministries in Collingswood, New Jersey, was trained in the Westcott-Hort tradition. In the following testimony he describes the negative influence that the modern versions had upon his Christian life:
- (1) “For about twenty years I was in darkness about this issue. I knew almost nothing of it from roughly 1951 to 1971. I was at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1948 to 1952. That was my Master of Theology. Then I stayed an extra year, 1953. Throughout those years we were simply told to use the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament, which we did in the Greek classes. ... And I didn’t know there was any other Greek text. I majored in classic Greek and Latin at the University of Michigan, 1945-48. I took three years to get my four years of work. ... Then I came to Dallas Seminary. I was learning New Testament Greek, and I didn’t pay much heed to the text. ... I just assumed that was the only one to use. I have always read from the King James Bible. I’ve always preached from the King James Bible. I’ve always studied from the King James Bible. I’ve never used any other Bible, even though at Dallas Theological Seminary they requested that we use the American Standard Version of 1901, the ASV. I never used it. ... I used the Old Scofield 1917 edition, and I was so committed to the excellence of the Scofield Reference Bible and their ‘wisdom,’ that every time the editors suggested a change in the Greek text, and a change in the English translation of that text, I went along with it. ... I WAS SO ENAMORED WITH THIS EDITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDITORIAL COMMENT, THAT EVERY TIME THEY SUGGESTED A CHANGE I WOULD PENCIL OUT ANY WORDS THAT THEY SAID DID NOT BELONG IN THE TEXT. In fact even in the Bible that I still have, that my wife gave to me in 1947 before we were married in 1948, these are penciled out. For example, in 1 Cor. 11:23, where it says, ‘This is my body which is broken for you.’ The marginal reference

says, 'Which is for you.' They take out 'broken,' so in my own copy of the Bible, the Old Scofield Bible, I have penciled out the word 'broken.' And so I have done throughout all the changes that they suggest in the margin."

- (2) This shows how destructive and confusing the textual criticism marginal notes can be even if the text itself is left intact. An example is the New King James Bible, which follows the Greek Received Text but which fills the margin with critical notes supporting the views of modern textual criticism.

#### **4. There is uncertainty produced by the multiplicity of English translations.**

- a. The English-speaking Christian is confronted today with a bewildering choice between dozens of versions, from the King James Bible to the New Living. Each of the modern versions claims to be newer and better. Each one claims to be more accurate, yet each one conflicts greatly with the others. While it is true that there were different Bible translations made in English prior to the Revised Version, none of them was put forward as a replacement of the King James Bible. Further, the average Christian was not confronted with a multiplicity of choices at the Christian bookstore as believers are today.
- b. There can be no doubt that this has resulted in uncertainty, confusion, compromise, and spiritual weakness.

**5. Dr. Edward Hills observed that in light of the uncertainty of modern textual criticism, it should be rejected.** "WHAT ONE SCHOLAR GRANTS ANOTHER TAKES AWAY. Instead of depending on such inconstant allies, Bible-believing Christians should develop their own type of Old Testament textual criticism, a textual criticism which takes its stand on the teachings of the Old Testament itself and views the evidence in the light of these teachings. Such a believing textual criticism leads us to full confidence in the Masoretic (Traditional) Hebrew text which was preserved by the divinely appointed Old Testament priesthood and the scribes and scholars grouped around it" (Hills, p. 102).

#### **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF THE "THE TYRANNY OF THE EXPERTS."**

"The critical point of departure had been made [with the ascendancy of the Westcott-Hort Text]. No longer was the majority of the Greek manuscripts, preserved by the churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their 'blindness and ignorance.' By their scholarly expertise they would deliver to the churches a purer text of the N.T. *Dr. Machen called this kind of scholarship 'the tyranny of the experts.'* [Machen did not apply this to textual criticism, but he should have.] *Now the 'experts' would rule over the churches and decide for them which variant reading was the acceptable one.* After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora's box had been opened. As a result, all the

evils of German rationalism began to tear at the foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. This ‘wrestling’ of the Scriptures has continued on until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. The situation today involves almost as many different texts of the Greek N.T. as there are scholars. Each ‘scholar’ decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. It comes down to two choices. We can accept the text handed down by the churches for nearly two thousand years or accept the findings of modern scholars, no two of which agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no one text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns among the scholars. THERE IS NO STANDARD” (Charles Turner, *Why the King James Version*, p. 9; Turner is the founder of the Baptist Bible Translators Institute of Bowie, Texas).

## **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF A DECLINE IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES**

The contemporary doctrine of eclecticism and the multiplication of contradictory English versions have elevated the Bible student as the master of the text and resulted in a massive decline in the authority of the Scriptures in this generation. The practice of dogmatic interpretation and preaching has faded greatly because of this principle. In a typical Bible study in a church that has bought into eclecticism, every individual is an authority unto his or herself as to what Greek manuscript or Greek text or English translation to follow in any given instance. There is no dogmatic authority for any statement, because someone can always come up with an alternative reading. This same principle has greatly weakened the authority of Bible preaching.

In the 19th century, Arthur Cleveland Coxe, Episcopalian bishop of western New York, warned that the authority of the Bible would be weakened if a multiplicity of competing versions were published.

“Every generation has its fashions; and the Bible, set again and again, according to prevailing whims, would become as untrustworthy as an old town-clock, continually corrected by private watches” (Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible; and a Review of the Extraordinary Changes Made in It by Managers of the American Bible Society* 1857, pp. 11, 12).

Note that Coxe understood that to set the English Bible on a path of continual revision and re-translation would be to weaken its authority, like a town clock that is continually corrected by private watches. We believe this is exactly what has happened since the 20th century.

I recall a visit in August 2003 to Saddleback Church in southern California, where Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Church” fame is senior pastor. On the way into the auditorium I observed that only a few of the people carried Bibles, and the reason became clear when I saw the bewildering multiplicity of versions that were used in the preaching. An outline of the sermon was handed out with the bulletin, and six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The

Message, Today's English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would have been impossible to have followed along in one's Bible. The result is that the people do not bring their own Bibles and do not therefore carefully test the preaching. How could they, when any biblical statement they would attempt to examine has dozens of variations?

## **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF ECUMENISM**

1. Modern Bible versions are one of the glues of the unscriptural ecumenical movement. As the modern versions have increased in acceptance, the ecumenical philosophy has also increased. They have worked hand-in-hand.

Consider the following statement made by the head of the World Council of Churches during the launching of a new edition of the ecumenical French Bible in Geneva: "HAVING A VARIETY OF TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE ENCOURAGES THE BIBLE TO BE READ IN A PLURAL AND ECUMENICAL WAY. HAVING A VARIETY OF TRANSLATIONS AVAILABLE IS A PRECIOUS TOOL IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM" (Sam Kobia, general secretary of the WCC, Ecumenical News International, Jan. 23, 2004). Thus we see that the liberals and ecumenists understand that a multiplicity of Bible versions works against biblical fundamentalism by weakening the authority of the Scriptures. The original ecumenical translation of the Bible in French was published in 1975 and was the first occasion in which Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestants worked together on a French Bible.

Following are some of the ways that the modern versions support the ecumenical movement:

- a. The interpretation of individual passages has been weakened and made less dogmatic by the multiplication of modern texts and versions. In a context in which Bible students use a variety of conflicting versions, it is impossible to be dogmatic about the meaning of texts to the same degree that dogmatism is possible when all students are committed to the same Bible.
- b. Doctrine in general has been weakened by the omissions and changes in the gnostic-influenced Alexandrian Greek text. We have demonstrated this in the section on the doctrinal superiority of the King James Bible. The doctrine of the deity of Christ, for example, is weakened in passages such as 1 Tim. 3:16. The doctrine of the Trinity is weakened with the omission of 1 John 5:7.
  - (1) This favors the ecumenical principle that doctrine is of secondary importance and that it should not divide.
  - (2) This favors the ecumenical principle that the denominational distinctives are merely acceptable varieties of the truth. One ecumenist has likened the

denominations to ice cream; there are many flavors but all of them are good and none to be rejected. “I love all kinds of ice cream. Sometimes I want vanilla with caramel topping, whipped cream, lots of nuts and a cherry. Other times I want Rocky Road, banana or chocolate chip. That’s why I love Baskin-Robbins ice cream stores. ... In Colorado Springs, Colorado, where I am a pastor, we enjoy 90 flavors of churches. ... I am saying that we need to appreciate the respected interpretations of Scripture that exist in the many Christian denominations” (Ted Haggard, “We Can Win Our Cities ... Together,” *Charisma*, July 1995). This unscriptural view is greatly encouraged by the eclectic doctrine, which teaches that the truth is found within the multiplicity of conflicting texts and versions.

- c. *Modern textual criticism has furthered the ecumenical movement by bringing Protestants, Baptists, and Catholics together in the field of Bible texts and translation.* We will document this in the final point of this study.

2. Consider who it is that loves the modern texts and versions. (For more about the ecumenical aspect of the texts and versions see *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*, available from Way of Life Literature.)

- a. The Unitarians love the modern texts and versions. Many of the prominent early textual critics were Unitarians, including Daniel Mace (1685-1753), Johann Wettstein (1693-1754), Alexander Geddes (1737-1802), Edward Harwood (1729-94), George Vance Smith (1816-1902), Ezra Abbot (1819-84), Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), and Caspar Rene Gregory (1846-1917).
- b. The Cults (Jehovah’s Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, Unification Church, Rosicrucian, etc.) love the modern texts and versions. Not one of the cults has taken a stand for the King James Bible and its Hebrew and Greek texts. In bookstores operated by the cults you will find the modern versions.
- c. The Roman Catholic Church loves the modern texts and versions.
  - (1) It is Rome’s own Vaticanus Greek manuscript that has been exalted by modern textual critics.
  - (2) The Roman Catholic Church has never accepted the Received Greek Text but it has adopted the critical Greek Text. This is called a “new age in the church.”
    - (a) “Catholics should work together with Protestants in the fundamental task of biblical translation. ... [They can] work very well together and HAVE THE SAME APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION. ... [THIS] SIGNALS A NEW AGE IN THE CHURCH” (Patrick Henry, *New Directions in New Testament Study*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1979, pp. 232-234).

- (b) The papal proclamation “Divine afflante Spiritu” in 1943 CALLED FOR AN ECUMENICAL BIBLE. “[T]hese translations [should] be produced in cooperation with separated brothers” (*New American Bible*, New York: World Publishing Co., 1970, p. vii).
  - (c) Rome has conformed its own Vulgate to the modern critical text. In 1965, Pope Paul VI authorized the publication of a new Latin Vulgate, with the Latin text conformed to the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament (Michael de Semlyen, *All Roads Lead to Rome*, p. 201). It was published in 1979 by the German Bible Society. Thus, Rome’s own Vulgate is now based on the critical Greek text.
  - (d) From 1967 until his retirement in the 2002, Catholic Cardinal Carlo Martini was on the editorial committee for the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament.
  - (e) Alberto Ablondi, Catholic bishop of Livorno, Italy, was “simultaneously a member of the General Committee and European Regional Executive Committee of the United Bible Societies, thus playing a part in the formulation and review of the UBS general policy” (*Quarterly Report*, Trinitarian Bible Society, Oct.-Dec. 1985, p. 24).
  - (f) Francis Arinze, Roman Catholic archbishop of Onitsha, Nigeria, was one of the vice-presidents of the United Bible Societies.
  - (g) The Bible Societies translation projects today are “interconfessional.” In 1987 a formal agreement was made between the Roman Catholic Church and the United Bible Societies that the critical Greek New Testament will be used for all future translations, both Catholic and Protestant (*Guidelines for International Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, Rome, 1987, p. 5).
- (3) The Roman Catholic Church has never accepted the King James Bible but it has given its imprimatur to many of the modern versions.
- (a) The *Oxford Annotated Bible* (edited by Bruce Metzger and Herbert May) became the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by a Roman Catholic authority. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, Massachusetts.
  - (b) In 1966, the “Roman Catholic Edition” of the Revised Standard Version was published. This version included the apocryphal books inserted among the books of the Old Testament and incorporated Catholic readings such as “full of grace” in Luke 1:28. As a result, the chief editor of the RSV, Luther Weigle, was rewarded the “Papal Knighthood of St. Gregory the Great” in 1966 by Pope Paul VI (Peter Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible*, 1999, p. 142).
  - (c) In October 1969, for the first time in its history the Church of England authorized a Catholic Bible for use in its services. The Full Synod of Canterbury Convocation authorized The Jerusalem Bible, which was



published in 1966 with the imprimatur of Cardinal Heenan.

- (d) In 1973 the Ecumenical Edition of the Revised Standard Version was published. Also called the “Common Bible,” a copy was presented personally to Pope Paul VI by Bruce Metzger, Herbert May, and others. Metzger reported on this as follows: “In a private audience granted to a small group, comprising the Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras, Lady Priscilla and Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and the present writer, Pope Paul accepted the RSV ‘Common’ Bible as a significant step in furthering ecumenical relations among the churches” (Metzger, “The RSV-Ecumenical Edition,” *Theology Today*, October 1977).
- c. Liberal Protestants love the modern versions. Not one liberal Protestant denomination has taken a stand for the King James Bible. They have adopted the neutral position of accepting all texts and versions. The liberal Protestant denominations are members of the World Council of Churches, which recommends almost any version *except* the King James Bible.
- d. The Charismatics love the modern versions. Since 1987 I have attended four ecumenical Charismatic conferences with press credentials, and one of the features is the multiplicity of modern versions and the eclectic view that characterizes each and every participant. For example, New Orleans ’87 brought together some 40,000 participants representing 40 different denominations. Roughly half were Roman Catholic. A bewildering variety of modern Bible versions were offered for sale at this conference.
- e. New Evangelicals love the modern versions. Consider the example of Billy Graham, one of the most influential names in the New Evangelical movement. He set the standard for accepting any new version that comes along. He has promoted the liberal Revised Standard Version, the Living Bible, the Today’s English Version, Eugene Peterson’s *The Message*, and others.

In the 19th century, Roman Catholics gave grudging praise to the King James Bible, recognizing that it was the bulwark of Protestantism in the English-speaking world. Consider the words of Jacobus Faber, who converted to the Roman Catholic Church from the Church of England in the 19th century during the Tractarian Movement. In the following statement he expresses his understanding that the stronghold of Protestantism was the King James Bible.

“Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of THE PROTESTANT BIBLE IS NOT ONE OF THE GREAT STRONGHOLDS OF HERESY IN THIS COUNTRY? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert scarcely knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. ... It is his sacred thing, which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in

his Saxon Bible" (Faber, quoted by J. Paterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible*, p. 132).

These words were not only true; they were prophetic. Since the pulling down of the King James Bible and its replacement among Protestant churches in general with the multiplicity of conflicting modern versions, the Rome-oriented Ecumenical movement has made amazing progress. I believe there is an intimate association between the two.

## **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF CARELESSNESS**

The multiplicity of versions has produced a climate of shameful carelessness about the Scriptures. In 1857, Arthur Coxe gave a warning about the revision of the English Bible that had been published by the American Bible Society. Compared to the modern English versions, it was an extremely minor revision, but even so it had doctrinal implications and Coxe and many others were zealous in their stand for the old Bible. Coxe explained the basis for his zeal in the Bible version issue: "The care with which the Hebrews guarded every jot and tittle of their Scriptures was never reproved by our Saviour. It is our duty and interest to imitate them in the jealousy with which God's Holy Word is kept in our own language. ... The true believer has instincts that cry out against a compromise that destroys what is dearer to his heart than life, even the truth of God's Word, its spirit as well as its letter" (Coxe, *An Apology for the Common English Bible*, pp. 8, 51).

This type of zeal for the words of the Bible is entirely lacking among those who are committed to the modern versions.

1. Consider the careless attitude toward texts and versions. In 1985 Dr. Thomas Hale, missionary doctor in Nepal, visited our house and discussed the issue of Bible versions with me. After that we corresponded some on this subject. He was surprised that one of the chief reasons for the differences between the KJV and the modern English versions is the fact that they are translated from different Greek texts. That was news to him. Yet at the end of our conversation, he concluded, "I cannot concern myself with that [referring to the thousands of words that are different]." He said that Christian unity is more important than worrying over the differences between texts and versions. This type of attitude is common within the climate created by the modern versions. Very few Christians (even those trained in seminaries) even know what the textual differences are, and when shown, they don't believe it matters one way or the other.

2. This careless attitude can be seen in the widespread adoption of corrupt paraphrases as standard Bibles. Some of the world's largest "evangelical" churches have gone over almost exclusively to paraphrases. Rick Warren of *Purpose Driven Church* fame prefers a multiplicity of paraphrases. In October 2004, I visited the bookstore operated by Hills Christian Life Centre in Sydney, Australia, the largest church in that country. To my knowledge, there were no King James Bibles for sale and the majority of the versions on display were paraphrases.

## THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE GIVEN AMMUNITION TO THE ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE

1. The Islamic Awareness website contains an article that quotes from the findings of modern textual criticism to cast doubt upon the Bible's authenticity. The report concludes in this way:

"It is pretty clear that the 'original' reading of the New Testament books is not restored. Well, we do not know what the 'original' reading is at the first place. The absurd claim that the Bible's literal text is restored to 99.8% is false as a quick comparison of the critical editions have shown above. The comparative study of the critical editions [published by Kurt and Barbara Aland] show a mere 63% agreement of the variant free verses not taking into consideration the orthographical differences. As far as the claim that the Bible being the word of God and its inerrancy is concerned, the less we talk about it, the better. This is because we do not have the 'original' text but myriad of imperfect, often divergent manuscripts from where the 'original' text has to be extracted by a committee of humans! Even worse, the 'best' reading is decided by voting!" (M.S.M. Saifullah and Abd ar-Rahman Robert Squires, *Textual Reliability of the New Testament*, 1999, <http://www.islamic-awareness.org/Bible/Text/Bibaccuracy.html#3>).

In fact, the Muslims who wrote this article are correct in their assessment of the findings of modern textual criticism. If modern textual criticism is true, the original text of the Bible has not been preserved. Where these Muslims go astray is in their thinking that modern textual criticism is the only genuine approach to the Bible's text.

2. Roman Catholic apologists also use modern textual criticism to undermine the Bible's authority. The catholicapologetics.net web site has at least seven articles that focus on this line of thought. (1) "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark." (2) "The 200 Contested Verses, and Phrases of the Protestant New Testament: A listing of two-hundred verses and phrases in the just the New testament of KJV that are contested (and in many cases rejected) by many of today's Protestant scholars, and today's modern Protestant translations." (3) "Sola which Scriptura Part 1, The KJV vs. NKJV: The NKJV makes over 100,000 word changes from the old 1611 KJV." (4) "Sola which Scriptura Part 2, The KJV vs. NIV: Which one is right? How much do they differ? Does it affect doctrine? Who changed it?" (5) "The 1611 KJV vs. the Present KJV: A Look at some of the Changes made to the text of the King James Version over the years." (6) "The KJV. vs. RV.: A short comparative look at the 1611 King James Version and the 1881 Revised Version." (7) "Here today Gone Tomorrow: A short comparative look some of the verses found in the 1611 King James Version which have 'disappeared' from most modern Protestant Versions of the Bible."

Consider an excerpt from the article "The 'Scripture Alone' Theory, and the Ending of the Gospel of Mark" -- "Another example, of the failure of the 'Scripture Alone' theory, is the ending of the gospel of Mark. Many modern Protestant translations find it difficult to determine how the apostle intended his gospel to end, for example the seven editions listed below actually provide three possible endings for Mark's work. ... One ending stops with 18:8, then there are to

other alternate endings, a long conclusion and a short conclusion. The long conclusion is the traditional verse 18:9-20, found in the King James Version. Then there is a alternate short conclusion, about the size of two verses. ... It is hard to hold the 'Scripture Alone' theory when there is no physical authority to look to in order to determine how the book of Mark ends. ... How can one be solely dependant on a book for spiritual guidance, when they cannot even authoritatively determine what are the physical bounds of the text it self? Thank God that as Catholics we have a visible Church to guide us with the authority to determine such matters for us."

The Roman Catholic who wrote this has a point. If modern textual criticism cannot determine the original ending of Mark's Gospel, which is a very important matter, where does this leave the doctrine of the infallible inspiration and complete authority of Scripture?

These are only two examples of how unbelievers use the work of modern textual critics to discredit the Scriptures. There is no doubt that the unbelieving principles and statements of rationalist modern textual critics (who overwhelmingly dominate the field) have given great cause for rejoicing to many unbelievers who would like nothing better than to believe that the Bible is a mere book.

## **THE MODERN TEXTS AND VERSIONS HAVE PRODUCED THE FRUIT OF THEOLOGICAL MODERNISM**

Having studied the Bible text-version issue for 25 years, it is obvious to me there is an intimate association between modern textual criticism (which gave us the modern Bible versions) and theological modernism between the so-called higher criticism and lower criticism. In fact, one would have to be spiritually blind not to see the association.

This has been admitted by modern textual critics. For example, in 1994 Joel Delobel wrote: "Looking back into history, one can see that A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE BIBLE ENTERED THE HOUSE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES THROUGH THE BACKDOOR OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM. ... I would like to illustrate how textual criticism prepared the way for a critical approach to the Bible in the works of Richard Simon (1638-1712). The first book of this French priest, *Histoire critique du Viex Testament* (1678), was attacked even before its publication, because far-reaching consequences of a number of text-critical observations were apprehended. ... It would be anachronistic to expect that Simon himself was entirely free of dogmatic bias. ... In his opinion, the very fact of the impressive textual variation in biblical manuscripts proved that the Bible was unreliably transmitted and this was used in defence of the Catholic doctrine of the authority of the Tradition, because the Protestant 'sola scriptura' could not be a sufficient source of truth" (Delobel, "Textual Criticism and Exegesis: Siamese Twins?" *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis and Church History*, edited by B. Aland and J. Delobel, 1994, pp. 98-100). Thus this textual critic admits that higher and lower criticism are twins and that higher or historic criticism got its head into the tent through "lower or textual criticism." Richard Simon, one of the earliest textual critics, was a Roman Catholic who used

textual criticism in his attempt to discredit the Bible's authority and to exalt Rome's.

The fathers of modern textual criticism in the 19th century were, for the most part, theological modernists and Unitarians or were men who were sympathetic to this position. Since the 20th century, even a greater degree of skepticism has dominated this field. For example, all of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration and believe that the Bible is filled with myths. We have documented this extensively in our book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*. The following are some of the chief names in this field of the past century, and to a man they rejected verbal inspiration: Philip Schaff, Joseph Thayer, Eberhard Nestle, Hermann von Soden, Frederic Kenyon, Kirsopp Lake, C.H. Dodd, Ernest Colwell, Kenneth Clark, Francis Burkitt, Frederick Conybeare, Rudolf and Gerhard Kittel, Henry Clay Vedder, James Rendel Harris, Adolf von Harnack, Caspar Gregory, Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, Charles Briggs, Alexander Souter, Henry Wheeler Robinson, James Moffatt, John Goodspeed, Millar Burrows, Theodore Skeat, William Barclay, J.B. Phillips, Gunther Zuntz, George Kilpatrick, F.F. Bruce, Reginald Fuller, Robert Grant, George Ladd, Bart Ehrman, Brevard Childs, Eldon J. Epp, J.K. Elliott, Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Allen Wikgren, and Bruce Metzger.

The skepticism that has dominated and permeated biblical scholarship during the past 150 years is a loud warning to a wise Bible believer, and it should come as no surprise that evangelicals and fundamentalists who have ignored this warning and have rushed forward to embrace modern textual criticism have been negatively affected.

1. The association between modern textual criticism and theological modernism can be established from Scripture. The following verses establish an association between affiliating with heresy and being infected by heresy: Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:33; Gal. 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:16-17. These Scriptures have been ignored by the New Evangelicals who renounced "separatism" since the days of Harold Ockenga in the late 1940s, and the result has been the leavening of evangelical scholarship with theological modernism. Contrary to the command of Scripture to separate from heretics, New Evangelicals sit at the feet of theological modernists by studying their books and pursuing degrees at liberal institutions, even studying at theological institutions in Germany, the very seat of modernism.

2. Consider some wise warnings about this association:

- a. Consider the warning from Dr. Edward F. Hills. Having studied textual criticism at the graduate level (he obtained a doctorate in this field from Harvard), Hills made the following observation: "... THE LOGIC OF NATURALISTIC TEXTUAL CRITICISM LEADS TO COMPLETE MODERNISM, to a naturalistic view not only of the biblical text but also of the Bible as a whole and of the Christian faith. For if it is right to ignore the providential preservation of the Scriptures in the study of the New Testament text, why isn't it right to go farther in the same direction? Why isn't it right to ignore other divine aspects of the Bible? Why isn't it right to

ignore the divine inspiration of the Scriptures when discussing the authenticity of the Gospel of John or the Synoptic problem or the authorship of the Pentateuch? ... IMPELLED BY THIS REMORSELESS LOGIC, MANY AN ERSTWHILE CONSERVATIVE BIBLE STUDENT HAS BECOME ENTIRELY MODERNISTIC IN HIS THINKING. But he does not acknowledge that he has departed from the Christian faith. For from his point of view he has not. He has merely traveled farther down the same path which he began to tread when first he studied naturalistic textual criticism of the Westcott and Hort type, perhaps at some conservative theological seminary. From his point of view his orthodox former professors are curiously inconsistent. They use the naturalistic method in the area of New Testament textual criticism and then drop it most illogically, like something too hot to handle, when they come to other departments of biblical study” (Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition, p. 83).

- b. Consider the warning from Dr. Thomas Strouse, Dean of Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary, Newington, Connecticut. “THE FRUIT OF THE WESTCOTT-HORT TEXTUAL CRITICISM THEORY IS BIBLIOLOGICAL HERESY. The fruit of this theory not only culminates in a false doctrine of preservation, but it also ends up in the modernist view of errancy in the autographa. For instance, Bruce Metzger advocates that Matthew incorporated errors in his royal genealogy of Christ (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. [NY: United Bible Societies, 1975], p. 1)” (Strouse, “The Pauline Antidote for Christians Caught in Theological Heresy: An Examination and Application of 2 Timothy 2:24-26,” Emmanuel Baptist Theological Seminary, Newington, CT, 2001).
- c. Consider the inadvertent warning of a modernistic textual critic. The theological danger inherent within the practice of textual criticism was admitted from the liberal side by E. Jay Epps of Harvard Divinity School: “Nor (for those who choose to work within a theological framework) is textual criticism a ‘safe’ discipline -- a phrase I have heard for four decades -- that can be practiced without challenge to theological convictions or without risk to faith commitments or truth assertions. I DOUBT THAT IT EVER WAS ‘SAFE’ -- AT LEAST FOR ANY WHO HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR MYRIAD VARIATION UNITS, WITH THEIR INNUMERABLE COMPETING READINGS AND CONCEPTIONS, AS WELL AS THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN SO MANY. BUT IF IT HAS BEEN A ‘SAFE’ DISCIPLINE, IT IS SAFE NO MORE. ... Any who embrace it as a vocation will find its intellectual challenges to have been increased a hundredfold by its enlarged boundaries and broadened horizons, which extend into codicology and papyrology and also into related early Christian, classical, literary, and sociological fields, all of which favor accommodation of the richness of the manuscript tradition, WITH ITS MULTIPLICITY OF TEXTS AND ITS MULTIVALENT ORIGINALS, RATHER

THAN THE MYOPIC QUEST FOR A SINGLE ORIGINAL TEXT. Both broad training and knowledge, and A CAPACITY TO TOLERATE AMBIGUITY will be high on the list of requisite qualifications for its practitioners” (E. Jay Epps, “The Multivalence of the Term ‘Original Text’ In New Testament Textual Criticism,” *Harvard Theological Review*, 1999, Vol. 92, No. 3, pp. 245-281; this article is based on a paper presented at the New Testament Textual Criticism Section, Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, Orlando, Florida, November 1998).

3. Let’s look at some examples of the association between modern textual criticism and theological modernism. This leaven is at work today within evangelical and fundamentalist seminaries that have adopted modern textual criticism. Consider some examples:

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

- a. Trinity professor D.A. Carson has written an influential book on the Bible version issue called “The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism.” This book has wielded considerable influence within evangelical and fundamentalist circles, yet this “evangelical” author has been dramatically influenced by theological modernism in regard to the text of Scripture.
- b. Carson has adopted some of the Inclusive Language translation techniques (*The Inclusive Language Debate*, Baker Books, 1998).
  - (1) Carson states that it is O.K. to change the singular pronouns of John 14:23 to plural. This is what the inclusive language NIVI (New International Version Inclusive, published by Hodder and Stoughton in 1996) does. It reads, “Those who love me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.” Carson supports that as well as many such inclusive language perversions.
  - (2) He says it is O.K. for the NIVI to change “brother” in Matthew 5:22 to “brother or sister.” He says, in fact, that this is “preferable,” even though it is not what Christ said.
  - (3) He supports the NIVI reading in John 11:50 and 1 Corinthians 15:21, which changes “man” to “human being,” even though both passages speak of Christ’s death and Christ was a man.
  - (4) He also defends the NIVI translation of Revelation 3:20, which changes the singular pronoun “eat with HIM” to the plural “eat with THEM,” thus destroying the lovely personal aspect of Christ’s promise.
  - (5) He discusses the changes in Psalm 8:4 from “what is man” to “what are mere

mortals” and “the son of man” to “human beings.” Even though this destroys a Messianic prophecy, Carson argues, “I am not convinced that those critics are right who say that terrible damage has been done by inclusive-language translations of this passage because they have somehow squeezed Christ to the periphery.”

- (6) All of this is acquiescence to theological modernism and is a denial of verbal inspiration.

c. Carson has adopted Form or Redaction Criticism of the Gospels.

- (1) Consider this statement from a book co-written by Carson: “Moreover, many of the assumptions on which form criticism is based appear to be valid: there was indeed a period of mainly oral transmission of the gospel materials; much of it was probably in small units; there probably was a tendency for this material to take on certain standard forms; and the early church has undoubtedly influenced the way in which this material was handed down. Defined narrowly in this way, there is undoubtedly a place for form criticism in the study of the Gospels” (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, pp. 23, 24). In fact, there is no scriptural validity for any of these assumptions, and all of them fly in the face of divine inspiration. To say that the “early church has undoubtedly influenced the way in which this material was handed down” is a plain rejection of the doctrine of divine inspiration. Either the Gospels were written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit or they were written by natural processes. There can be no middle ground for a believer. The Lord Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13) and 2 Timothy 3:16 states that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. That settles the matter. Whether or not the authors of the Gospels used some secondary sources is a meaningless question for the believer. If they did use secondary sources, we will never know what they were. God has not chosen to reveal that to us, so it is insignificant. All we need to know is that the Holy Spirit gave the Gospels. It is our duty to study those Gospels believingly and preach them to the whole world instead of pursuing the vain path of wasting countless hours trying to ascertain whether there was a document called “Q” or whether Matthew might have borrowed something from Mark or Mark from Matthew, etc.

- (2) Carson claims that in the Gospels we do not have the actual words of Jesus but only a semblance of what Jesus said. “But their failure to preserve the *ipsissima verba Jesu* (the authentic WORDS of Jesus) does not mean that they have tampered with the *ipsissima vox Jesu* (the authentic VOICE of Jesus)” (D.A. Carson, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 1992, p. 44). This is the old modernistic argument that the Gospels give only a



semblance of what Christ said rather than His actual words. And it a repetition of the modernistic mumbo-jumbo that the Bible is somehow authoritative even though it is not verbally inerrant.

#### Dallas Theological Seminary

- a. Dallas Professor Daniel Wallace supports the redaction approach to the Gospels, that the Gospels were written not by direct inspiration of God but by copying material from secondary sources, thereby denying the inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit as taught by Christ and the Apostles. Wallace's 35-page report called "The Synoptic Problem," which was published on the Internet, is largely a review of Robert H. Stein's "The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction." (Stein is a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.)
- b. Note carefully the following excerpts from Wallace's report:
  - (1) "It is quite impossible to hold that the three synoptic gospels were completely independent from each other. In the least, they had to have shared a common oral tradition. But the vast bulk of NT scholars today would argue for much more than that" (Wallace, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 1). To the contrary, the proponents of Redaction Criticism have not proved this point, nor can they.
  - (2) "We shall see later that before the Gospels were written there did exist a period in which the gospel materials were passed on orally, and it is clear that this oral tradition influenced not only the first of our synoptic Gospels but the subsequent ones as well" (Wallace, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 4). This is modernistic nonsense. It is clear from the Epistles that the authors of the New Testament were in the habit of writing and there is no evidence whatsoever that the Gospels were passed along orally prior to being written down.
  - (3) "The majority of NT scholars hold to Markan priority [Mark was written first and then Matthew and Luke based their gospels upon it] (either the two-source hypothesis of Holtzmann or the four-source hypothesis of Streeter). This is the view adopted in this paper as well" (Wallace, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 6). The Gospel writers had no reason to borrow from one another, because each one was written for a different purpose, to complete the divinely inspired four-fold portrait of Christ.
  - (4) "One argument concerning Mark's harder readings which has been (as far as I can tell) completely overlooked is the probability that neither Luke nor Matthew had pristine copies of Mark at their disposal. . . . An intermediate scribe is probably responsible--either intentionally or unintentionally--for more than a few of the changes which ended up in Luke and Matthew" (Wallace, *The*

*Synoptic Problem*, footnote 49). What a haphazard view of the Gospels! It flies in the face of divine inspiration.

- (5) “Matthew and Luke have in common about 235 verses not found in Mark. . . . Only two viable reasons for such parallels can be given: either one gospel writer knew and used the gospel of the other, or both used a common source” (Wallace, *The Synoptic Problem*, p. 19). The Dallas professor is wrong. There is a third “viable reason,” and that is that each Gospel was given by divine inspiration and the material unique to each one as well as the material shared in common was selected by the Holy Spirit.

### Bob Jones University

- a. It is not surprising that heretical views of Scripture are beginning to infiltrate some fundamentalist training institutions, inasmuch as they are sitting at the feet of theological modernists and modernistic-influenced New Evangelicals by using textbooks written by men such as Bruce Metzger, Kurt Aland, and the aforementioned D.A. Carson and Daniel Wallace. Fundamentalist professors are also going after degrees from institutions such as Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Dallas Theological Seminary.
- b. Consider what is happening in regard to the doctrine of biblical preservation at Bob Jones University. On a visit to the bookstore in March 2005 I saw at least five books for sale by the liberal Bruce Metzger who believes that the Old Testament is filled with myth, including his book *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, which by its very title denies the divine preservation of Scripture.
- c. Samuel Schnaiter is on the Bible faculty at Bob Jones University. His 1980 Ph.D. dissertation was titled “The Relevancy of Textual Criticism to the Modern English Version Controversy for Fundamentalists.”
  - (1) Consider an excerpt: “With regard to preservation, however, no Scripture explicitly declares anything of this sort of guidance to apply to the manuscript copyists as far as the precise wording of the text is concerned. Some have deduced such supernatural guidance from Scripture. They note passages that promise God’s Word shall never perish or be lost. However, SUCH PROMISES OF PRESERVATION IN VIEW OF THE WORDING VARIATIONS MUST APPLY ONLY TO THE MESSAGE OF GOD’S WORD, NOT ITS PRECISE WORDING” (Schnaiter, *Relevancy of Textual Criticism*, 1980).
  - (2) Schnaiter makes two bold claims: (1) He asserts that the Bible nowhere explicitly promises divine verbal preservation of the Scriptures. We reject this

claim entirely, as we can read the Bible for ourselves and we know that it does make explicit promises of the preservation not only of words but even of jots and tittles (e.g., Mat. 5:18; 24:35). (2) Schnaiter asserts that *IF* there has been divine preservation of the Scriptures (and he does not affirm plainly that he believes such preservation has occurred), it has not been of the actual words God gave to holy men of old but only of the general MESSAGE. Schnaiter believes in verbal inspiration of “the original manuscripts” but he believes only in the preservation of the general thoughts of Scripture.

- (3) The authors of the ancient confessions of faith would strongly disagree with this fundamentalist professor. “The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1648). This same statement on preservation was affirmed by Baptists in the London Confession of 1677 and the Philadelphia of 1742. Men of God in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries believed in divine preservation AS IT APPLIED TO THE SCRIPTURES THEY POSSESSED IN THE MASORETIC HEBREW AND THE RECEIVED GREEK TEXT.
- (4) Scholarly fundamentalists today who are following modern textual criticism are abandoning the faith of their fathers, yet they belittle those fundamentalists who are standing in the old paths in this issue as it was defined in the ancient confessions.
- (5) Dr. Edward F. Hills observed that the doctrine of preservation cannot be nebulous; it is either a real thing that can be traced through history and that is therefore foundational for textual studies, or it cannot be regarded as a fact. Reasonably speaking and scripturally speaking, there is no middle ground. “For if the providential preservation of the Scriptures was not important for the study of the New Testament text, then it could not have been important for the history of the New Testament text. And if it had not been important for the history of the New Testament, then it must have been non-existent. It could not have been a fact. And if the providential preservation of the Scriptures was not a fact, why should the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures be regarded as a fact? Why would God infallibly inspire a book and then decline to preserve it providentially? For example, why would God infallibly inspire the Gospel of Mark and then permit (as Warfield thought possible) the ending of it (describing the resurrection appearances of Christ) to be lost?”

### Central Baptist Theological Seminary

- a. W. Edward Glenny, who taught at Central prior to his move to another school, contributed to *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary* (1997). Glenny's article is titled "The Preservation of Scripture."
- b. Consider the following excerpt: "The doctrine of the preservation of Scripture was first included in a church creed in 1647. As we have argued above IT IS NOT A DOCTRINE THAT IS EXPLICITLY TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE, nor is it the belief that God has perfectly and miraculously preserved every word of the original autographs in one manuscript or text--type. It is a belief that God has providentially preserved His Word in and through all the extant manuscripts, versions and other copies of Scripture. ... not only does no verse in Scripture explain how God will preserve His Word, but THERE IS NO STATEMENT IN SCRIPTURE FROM WHICH ONE CAN ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE. ... it is also obvious from the evidence of history that GOD HAS NOT MIRACULOUSLY AND PERFECTLY PRESERVED HIS WORD IN ANY ONE MANUSCRIPT OR GROUP OF MANUSCRIPTS, OR IN ALL THE MANUSCRIPTS" (Glenny, *The Bible Version Debate*, pp. 93, 95, 99).
- c. Glenny has stated his position plainly. He boldly denies that the Bible promises the preservation of Scripture. He explains away every passage that has traditionally been cited in support of preservation, including Ps. 12:7; 105:8; 119:89, 152, 160; Isa. 40:8; Matt. 5:18; and Matt. 24:35. At the same time, he audaciously claims "a belief that God has providentially preserved His Word in and through all the extant manuscripts." This is an impossible position. There can be no "belief" without a plain word from God. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). If God has not explicitly promised to keep His word, we cannot have any faith in the matter. In that case, the fathers of modern textual criticism were correct in treating the Bible like any other book and applying the same theories of criticism to it as they would to the works of Homer or any other ancient non-inspired writing.
- d. This is the leaven of theological modernism, and the Scripture warns, "A little leaven leaveth the whole lump."

### Tennessee Temple University

- a. James Price, a professor at Tennessee Temple University, worked on the Old Testament portion of the New King James Bible, but he does not believe the Received Text is the preserved Word of God. The publishers of the New King James Bible implied in their advertisements that they revered the King James Bible

and its Received Text and thus aimed to continue its legacy, but the men who did the translation actually believe the KJV is a weak, corrupt translation and they are committed to the critical Greek text. In an e-mail to me dated April 30, 1996, Dr. Price said: "I am not a TR advocate. ... I am not at war with the conservative modern versions."

- b. In another e-mail, Dr. Price stated that the Bible nowhere explicitly teaches that God will preserve the Scriptures. "ONE MAY INFER THE DOCTRINE OF PRESERVATION FROM STATEMENTS IN THE BIBLE, BUT THE EXPLICIT TERM 'PRESERVE' (OR ITS DERIVATIVES) IS NEVER USED IN THE KJV OF THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD" (Price, e-mail, Dec. 20, 2000).
- c. Whether or not the term "preserve" (or even its derivatives) is in the Bible has no meaning for this debate. The question is, "Does the Bible teach that God will preserve the Scriptures?" When Price was challenged for stating that God did not promise to preserve the Scriptures, he replied, "I know the passages that infer preservation, and I believe the doctrine. I just don't think that the Bible explicitly states how God preserved His word." James Price is therefore not quite as bold as Glenny or Schnaiter, but he does most definitely cast doubt upon preservation by his claim that the Bible NOWHERE explicitly states or promises preservation.
- d. If Price's view is correct and preservation is only implied or hinted at, how can we believe it is true? He says there are inferences. Are those inferences authoritative so that a doctrine can be built on them? If not, they hold no meaning from a doctrinal perspective. If the "inferences" are clear enough to build a doctrine on, then what is Price getting at? Either God has promised to preserve the Scripture, or He has not. What is this strange, muddled, middle-of-the-road position? In fact, it is the product of a fundamentalist who is attempting to hold to the Bible with one hand and modern textual criticism with the other. Dr. Price wants to believe in divine preservation in some manner while at the same time holding to the textual critic's position that no witness to preservation of the text is evident in the "record." These are contradictory positions and they cannot be held together for long. I predict that many of Price's seminary students will be more consistent and will reject the doctrine of preservation altogether, following in the footsteps of most of the authors and influential names in the field of modern textual criticism.
- e. When the New Evangelicals began associating with the theological modernists in the late 1940s, using their textbooks, sitting at their feet in seminaries, affiliating with them in their denominations, it took only ONE DECADE for the evangelicals to be infiltrated by modernistic views and to adopt the historio-critical theories that lie at the heart of theological modernism. Harold Lindsell, one of the founding fathers of New Evangelicalism, admitted this: "I must regretfully conclude that the term evangelical has been so debased that it has lost its usefulness. ... Forty years ago the

term evangelical represented those who were theologically orthodox and who held to biblical inerrancy as one of the distinctives. ... WITHIN A DECADE OR SO NEOEVANGELICALISM . . . WAS BEING ASSAULTED FROM WITHIN BY INCREASING SKEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY OR INERRANCY” (Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 1979, p. 319).

It is not surprising to see the more scholarly elements of the fundamental Baptist movement questioning preservation, because many of them are sitting at the feet of the textual critics mentioned above. Books by Bruce Metzger and Kurt Aland are readily available in the bookstores and classrooms of schools such as Bob Jones University, Tennessee Temple University, Central Baptist Seminary, and Detroit Baptist Seminary. Every one of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament is a proponent of the modernistic historical critical approach to the Bible, yet many fundamentalist seminaries have adopted this New Testament and the tainted, unbelieving theories underlying it.

It does not surprise me that Glenny, Price, and others who have adopted modern textual criticism are beginning to approach the Bible with the same naturalistic attitude as the fathers of this “science falsely so called.” Strangely, they are spending more time pointing out alleged errors in the Bible, claiming there are errors in all Bibles, and rebuking men who do not believe the KJV contains error than in defending the Bible from its enemies. I say strangely, because this is indeed a strange endeavor for men who allegedly believe in an infallible Bible. In fact, it is infallible to them only in theory.

The Bible warns that evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Cor. 15:33), and this is exactly what has happened to fundamentalists who are sitting at the feet of the textual critics. Of course, they will not admit that they follow the textual critics, as they profess to be independent thinkers; but their views on Bible preservation sound suspiciously the same.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS PART X. WE HOLD TO THE KJV BECAUSE OF THE EVIL FRUIT OF THE MODERN VERSIONS**

1. Francis Turretin warned that if corruption is admitted in passages of “----- importance, why not in others of -----”?
2. Thomas Rennell warned against a revision of the King James Bible upon critical lines because “the probable good bears no manner of proportion to the threatened -----” and the revision could result in the whole fabric of faith “----- to its foundation.”
3. John Jeff warned that for every small error corrected how many worse ones would be introduced?
4. Alexander M’Caul warned most strongly against what?
5. M’Caul warned that that “a doubtful, ----- reading” might be put forth as the oracle of God.

6. Lord Panmure warned in 1857 that a revision of the King James Bible would be “the most ---- and ----- thing which could occur to this country.”
7. D.H. Conrad warned in 1856 that a revision of the King James Bible would open “a -----” through which the floods of innovation may sweep away “the sacred -----.”
8. Anthony Cooper warned in 1856 that if a multiplicity of modern versions were to replace the King James Bible the average Christian would “be obliged to go to some ----- in whom you reposed confidence, and ask him which version he recommended.”
9. Cooper felt that such a thing was “far more dangerous than ----- or -----.”
10. Joseph Philpot warned that a revision of the King James Bible would “----- the minds of thousands, as to which was the Word of God.”
11. Philpot called the King James Bible “this ---- of all dispute, this ----- of all controversy” and warned that a new version would result in confusion.
12. Philpot felt that a majestic and beautiful Bible was to be preferred to a one in the “---- and --- ----- language of the day.”
13. Philpot called the King James Bible the “grand bulwark of -----; the ----- of the Gospel, and the ----- of the church.”
14. Textual critic Rendel Harris said the New Testament text is “perhaps finally -----.”
15. Textual critic F.C. Conybeare claimed that the New Testament text “is for ever -----.”
16. Textual critic Kirsopp Lake believed that we do not know the original form of the Gospels and “it is quite likely that we ---- -----.”
17. Textual critic Robert Grant believed that the original text of the Bible “----- be recovered.”
18. Textual critic Kenneth Clark believed that modern textual criticism had “reached a ---- ---.”
19. Textual critic G. Zuntz testified that skepticism prevailed among textual critics and that they viewed the restoration of the original text “as an ----- -----.”
20. Textual critic H. Greevan said the original text remained “a -----.”
21. Textual critic R. M. Grant said that to recover the original text “is well nigh -----.”
22. Textual critic Kenneth Clark called the original text a “retreating -----.”
23. Textual critic E. Jay Epps claimed that the original text had exploded “into a ----- and highly ----- multivalent entity.”
24. In 1966 seven important pieces of Scripture were restored to the Nestle’s New Testament in what chapter of the Gospels?
25. Edward Hills warned that those who build their New Testament upon modern textual criticism are “building their house upon the ----.”
25. When Kurt and Barbara Aland compared seven editions of the critical Greek New Testament from the past 100 years, they found that they agreed in what percentage of the verses in the Gospels?
26. How many of the foundational principles of Westcott and Hort have been debunked by contemporary textual critics?
27. How is the situation in the field of modern textual criticism similar to that of Darwinian evolution?
28. How does the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament rate textual variants?
29. Kurt and Barbara Aland said the UBS Greek New Testament is not a static entity, that “every change in it is ---- to -----.”

30. Bruce Metzger has admitted that the UBS Greek New Testament contains readings that are treated with a high degree of probability by its own editors but that other scholars would “consider much more ----- or would even -----.”
31. The modern Bible translator is not given a New Testament to translate; he is given ----- of -----” from which he is expected to construct his own Bible.
32. John Burgon was concerned about the marginal readings in the English Revised Version and warned that the effect on the devout reader of Scripture “is the ----- of edifying: is ---- helpful: is always -----.”
33. In his student days Donald Waite was influenced by the textual notes in the Scofield Bible. What did he do to those words in the text that were questioned in the marginal notes?
34. What is the “tyranny of the experts”?
35. How does the use of a multiplicity of conflicting versions result in a decline in the authority of the Bible?
36. The leader of the World Council of Churches said that having a variety of translations encourages the Bible to be read “in a ----- and ----- way” and is “a precious tool in the struggle against religious -----.”
37. Name three of the Unitarians who were influential in the development of modern textual criticism.
38. Patrick Henry said that Catholics and Protestants working together in Bible translation “signals a --- --- in the church.”
39. What is the name of the Roman Catholic cardinal who is an editor of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament?
40. In what year was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible approved by the Roman Catholic Church?
41. UBS Greek New Testament editor Bruce Metzger presented a copy of the “Common Bible” personally to what Pope in what year?
41. How has Billy Graham encouraged the acceptance of the modern Bible versions?
42. Roman Catholic Jacobus Faber called the King James Bible “one of the great ----- of heresy.”
43. What verse warns that evil communications corrupt good manners?
44. What verse in Galatians warns that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
45. What passage warns that profane and vain teachings will eat as doth a canker?
46. Edward Hills warned that “the logic of naturalistic textual criticism leads to ----- -----.”
47. Thomas Strouse warns that the “fruit of Westcott-Hort textual criticism theory is ----- -----.”
48. E. Jay Epps warns that if modern textual criticism “has ever been a safe discipline, it is ---- -- ----.”
49. D.A. Carson says it is O.K. to change the singular verb to plural in Revelation 3:20. Why is this wrong?
50. Carson believes the early church influenced the way in which the New Testament books have been handed down to us, that they modified what was originally written. Why is this wrong?



51. Carson says there is a place for form criticism of the Gospels. Why is this wrong?
52. Why are heretical views of the Scripture beginning to infiltrate some fundamentalist schools?
53. BJU professor Samuel Schnaiter said God's promises of preservation does not apply to the precise wording of Scripture only "to the ----- of God's Word."
54. When he was a professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, W. Edward Glenny said Bible preservation "is not a doctrine that is ----- taught in Scripture."
55. Glenny said "there is no statement in Scripture from which one can establish the doctrine of the ----- of the ---- of Scripture."
56. Glenny said, "God has not ----- and ----- preserved His Word in any one manuscript or group of manuscripts or in all the manuscripts."
57. Is it possible to establish a doctrine upon something that is merely inferred in Scripture?
58. In the late 1940s New Evangelicals repudiated separation and affiliated with modernists. Looking back on this later, Harold Lindsell warned that it took about -- years before New Evangelicalism was being assaulted from within by increasing skepticism with regard to biblical infallibility.

# A Textual Checklist

The following are some of the key omissions and changes in the critical Greek text, largely based on the Sinaiticus and/or the Vaticanus plus a handful of other manuscripts that contain Alexandrian or Egyptian readings. These omissions and changes are found in most of the modern English versions. Where these omissions or changes also appear in the Rheims-Douay of 1582 (from the 1841 *Hexapla*) and thus in the Latin Vulgate from which it was translated, I have noted this. The omissions and changes found in the Rheims-Douay also appear in the Wycliffe English Bible of 1382 unless otherwise noted.

## Abbreviations

Aleph - Codex Sinaiticus

B - Codex Vaticanus

A - Codex Alexandrinus

WH - Westcott-Hort Greek N.T. of 1881

N - Nestles' Greek N.T.

UBS - United Bible Societies' Greek N.T.

ASV - American Standard Version

RSV - Revised Standard Version

NASV - New American Standard Version

NIV - New International Version

## ABBREVIATED CHECK LIST

### Matthew

---- 6:13 -- "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" omitted Aleph, B, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, NASV, RSV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 9:13 -- the words "to repentance" omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, Rheims-Douay

---- 17:21 -- "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 18:11 -- "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV

---- 19:17 -- "Why callest thou me good?" is changed to "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Aleph, B, ASV, RSV, NEB, NIV

---- 23:14 -- "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." verse omitted Aleph, B, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV

---- 27:35\*\* -- "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots" omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin

## Mark

- 2:17 -- “to repentance” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay)
- 7:16 -- “If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.” verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 9:44, 46 -- “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” both verses omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 11:26 -- “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” verse omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 13:14 -- “spoken by Daniel the prophet” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay
- 15:28 -- “And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.” verse omitted Aleph, B, A, D, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 16:9-20 -- entire ending of Mark omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

## Luke

- 2:22\*\* -- “her purification” changed to “their purification” in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority of Byzantine Greek but found in Latin, some Greek, other versions, and quotations. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 2:33 -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay
- 4:4 -- “every word of God” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 17:36 -- “Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.” verse omitted WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 22:43-44 -- “And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” both verses omitted B, A, WH (double brackets), N (double brackets), UBS (double brackets), ASV (margin), RSV, NIV (margin)
- 23:17 -- “(For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)” verse omitted B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 24:51 -- “was carried up into heaven” omitted Aleph, D, WH (double brackets), N, UBS (B rating), RSV, NASV

## John

- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, RSV, NASV, NIV
- 4:42 -- “the Christ” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 5:3-4 -- “waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 6:69 -- “that Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the holy one of God” WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted (creating an error in the Scripture) Aleph, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV (footnote “some early manuscripts do not have ‘yet’”)

---- 7:53--8:11 -- Entire passage omitted WH (double brackets), N, UBS (double brackets), ASV (bracket), RSV, NASV (bracket), NIV (footnote says “The earliest and most reliable manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53-8:11”)

## **Acts**

---- 7:37\*\* -- “him shall ye hear” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions

---- 8:37\*\* -- “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” verse omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin and some Greek and versions (found in at least 9 Greek manuscripts, some lectionaries, some Old Latin, some Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, Slavonic, and quoted by at least 7 “church fathers”)

## **Romans**

---- 1:16 -- “of Christ” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” changed to “judgment seat of God” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV. (The “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ with Jehovah God, Isaiah 45:23.)

## **1 Corinthians**

---- 5:7 -- “for us” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 7:5 -- “fasting” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 15:47 -- “the Lord” omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **Galatians**

---- 3:17 -- “in Christ” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **Ephesians**

---- 3:9 -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **Colossians**

---- 1:14 -- “through his blood” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **1 Timothy**

---- 3:16 - “God” omitted in most Latin manuscripts (replaced with “which”) and in the Alexandrian text (replaced with “who” in the Sinaiticus), but it is present in most Greek manuscripts. Omitted in WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 6:5 -- “from such withdraw thyself” omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **Hebrews**

---- 1:3 -- “by himself” omitted Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **James**

---- 5:16 -- “faults” changed to “sins” Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **1 Peter**

---- 2:2 -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” Aleph, B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay (but not omitted in the Wycliffe)

---- 4:1 -- “for us” omitted B, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **1 John**

---- 4:3 -- “confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” changed to “confesseth not Jesus” B, A, WH, N, UBS, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 5:7\*\* -- “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

## **Revelation**

---- 1:8\*\* -- “the beginning and the ending” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 1:11\*\* -- “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ... which are in Asia” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 8:13\*\* -- “angel” changed to “eagle” in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 21:24\*\* -- “of them which are saved” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, A, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

---- 22:19\*\* -- “book of life” changed to “tree of life” in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV, Rheims-Douay

## **SUPER ABBREVIATED CHECKLIST**

\* = omitted or changed in the Latin Vulgate but typically found in the Greek (16 instances in this abbreviated checklist)

\*\* = omitted or changed in the Byzantine Greek but typically found in the Latin (6 instances in this abbreviated checklist)

## **Matthew**

---- 6:13\* -- “for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

---- 17:21 -- “Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting” omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

---- 27:35\*\* -- “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority of Byzantine Greek but found in Latin, some Greek, other versions, quotations.

## **Mark**

---- 9:44, 46 -- “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” both verses omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

---- 13:14\* -- “spoken of by Daniel the prophet” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

---- 16:9-20 -- entire ending of Mark omitted in the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus but present in most Greek and Latin manuscripts

## **Luke**

---- 2:22\*\* -- “her purification” changed to “their purification” in the Alexandrian Text as well as the majority of Byzantine Greek but found in Latin, some Greek, other versions, and quotations. Omitted Aleph, B, WH, N, UBS, MT, ASV, RSV, NASV, NIV

---- 2:33\* -- “Joseph” is changed to “the child’s father” in the Alexandrian text and in the Latin Vulgate but present in the Byzantine Greek

---- 4:8\* -- “get thee behind me Satan” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but present in the Byzantine Greek

---- 24:51 -- “was carried up into heaven” omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

## **John**

---- 1:27 -- “is preferred before me” is omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

---- 3:13 -- “who is in heaven” is omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

---- 6:69 -- “that Christ, the Son of the living God” is changed to “the holy one of God” in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

---- 7:8 -- “yet” omitted in the Alexandrian text but included in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate

## **Acts**

---- 7:37\*\* -- “him shall ye hear” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions

---- 8:37\*\* -- “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” verse omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as the Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin and some Greek and versions (found in at least 9 Greek manuscripts, some lectionaries, some Old Latin, some Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, Slavonic, and quoted by at least 7 “church fathers”)

---- 9:5, 6\*\* -- “it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most of the Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin and some Greek and versions

## **Romans**

---- 14:10 -- “judgment seat of Christ” changed to “judgment seat of God” in the Alexandrian text but not in the Byzantine Greek and the Latin Vulgate. The “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ with Jehovah God (Isaiah 45:23).

## **1 Corinthians**

---- 5:7\* -- “for us” is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

---- 15:47\* -- “the Lord” is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

## **Galatians**

---- 3:17\* -- “in Christ” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

## **Ephesians**

---- 3:9\* -- “by Jesus Christ” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

## **Colossians**

---- 1:14\* -- “through his blood” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but included in the Byzantine Greek

## **1 Timothy**

---- 1:17\* -- “wise” omitted in the Alexandrian and Latin Vulgate but found in the Byzantine Greek

---- 3:16\* -- “God” omitted and replaced with “who” in the Alexandrian text and “which” in the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek.

---- 6:5\* -- “from such withdraw thyself” omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek

## **Hebrews**

---- 1:3\* -- “by himself” is omitted in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek



## **1 Peter**

---- 2:2\* -- “grow thereby” is changed to “grow unto salvation” in the Alexandrian text and the Latin Vulgate but is found in the Byzantine Greek. The Wycliffe Bible has “that in it ye wax into health.”

## **1 John**

---- 5:7\*\* -- “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” omitted in the Alexandrian Text as well as most Byzantine Greek but found in the Latin, some Greek, and versions.

## **Revelation**

---- 1:8\*\* -- “the beginning and the ending” omitted from most Greek manuscripts, including the Byzantine, but it is present in most Latin manuscripts.

---- 1:11\*\* -- “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last” omitted from most Greek manuscripts, including the Byzantine, but it is present in most Latin manuscripts.

---- 8:13\* -- “angel” is changed to “eagle” in the Alexandrian and the Latin Vulgate but remains “angel” in the Byzantine Greek

---- 22:19\*\* -- “book of life” is changed to “tree of life” in the Alexandrian text and the Byzantine Greek but “book of life” is found in the Latin Vulgate

# A Basic Bible Version Library

The following are some books that I recommend as a basic library on the Bible version issue.

**THE BIBLE VERSION QUESTION ANSWER DATABASE** by David Cloud. This volume gives accurate, diligently-researched, in-depth answers to more than 80 of the most common and important questions on this important topic. 375 pages. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org, <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

**A CLOSER LOOK: EARLY MANUSCRIPTS AND THE AUTHORIZED VERSION** by Jack Moorman. This is a brilliant and groundbreaking piece of believing research. By careful and discerning analysis of the four major areas of extant textual evidence -- uncials, minuscules, versions, and quotations, Moorman demonstrates that the Traditional Text underlying the Reformation Bibles has much greater support than the critical text underlying the modern versions. Along the way he destroys many of the myths of modern textual criticism. The last section of the book deals with 365 doctrinal passages that are corrupted in the modern texts and versions, listing the support both for and against the Traditional Text. Pastor Moorman spent countless hours developing this very practical Manuscript Digest that should be in the library of every Bible defender. The book explodes the myth that there is the textual debate is not a doctrinal issue and that doctrine is not affected by the omissions and changes in the critical Greek text. We thank the Lord for the wisdom that God has given to this brother in Christ. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

**DEFENDING THE KING JAMES BIBLE** by Donald A. Waite. Dr. Waite is a Baptist scholar who has written in the defense of the Received Text and the King James Bible since 1971. Dr. Waite has 118 semester hours (1,888 class hours) of training in the biblical and other foreign languages, plus countless hours of teaching and personal research in the use of these languages. He holds a Th.M. with high honors in New Testament Greek Literature and Exegesis from Dallas Theological Seminary in 1952; a Th.D. with honors in Bible Exposition from Dallas Seminary in 1955; and a Ph.D. in Speech from Purdue University in 1961. Dr. Waite has written in defense of the King James Bible since 1971, and his 1992 book *Defending the King James Bible* is an important contribution to this field. Waite presents a four-fold superiority of the King James Bible: It is superior in its Greek and Hebrew texts, superior in its translators, superior in its translation technique, and superior in its theology. 352 pages, 5X8, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

**EVALUATING VERSIONS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT** by Everett w. Fowler (1906-1990). Fowler was a deacon in the famous First Baptist Church of New York City, a center of

fundamentalism from its inception in 1711. He sat under the ministry of and served with the respected Fundamentalist leader Dr. Isaac M. Haldeman (1845-1933), who pastored the First Baptist Church from 1884 to 1933. By profession Fowler was an engineer, with a degree from Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Mr. Fowler's faithful heart for Christ was witnessed by a long life of faithful service in this church—deacon (over 45 years), Sunday School teacher (more than 40 years), trustee (37 years), church treasurer (more than 21 years), church clerk (25 years). As a young man, Fowler made a commitment to the Lord to rise before breakfast for personal devotions. He read the Bible through twice a year in English for some 40 years. This was in addition to his study of the Greek New Testament. Fowler's concern for the issue of texts and versions began in 1953, when he enrolled in the New Testament class at his church with the goal of reading the Greek New Testament. As his study progressed, he became increasingly concerned about the differences he was seeing between the modern critical Greek text and the Received Text underlying his King James Bible. He began a diligent comparative study of the two, noting the exact differences between the various editions of the critical Greek text and the Received Text, as well as the differences between the modern English versions and the King James Bible. The fruit of this prodigious labor was his book *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*. Its chief feature is a series of charts showing the significant theological differences between the texts and versions. Table I lists the whole verses omitted or enclosed in brackets in the new versions. Table II lists significant portions of verses omitted. Table III lists the omissions of names of Jesus Christ omitted. Table IV lists other differences that have a substantial effect on the meaning. Table V lists the total word differences between the United Bible Societies text and the Received Text. Table VI is a summary of the differences that affect translation. 8.5 X 11 format, 70 pages. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***FAITH VS. THE MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS: A COURSE ON BIBLE TEXTS AND VERSIONS AND A 10-FOLD DEFENSE OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE.*** To our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive course on this topic in print. The two large-format volumes contain more than 800 pages of information. The author has researched this issue for 25 years, having built one of the largest personal libraries on this subject and having done on-site investigation in many parts of the world, including Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, and Italy. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***FOR LOVE OF THE BIBLE*** by David Cloud. This book traces the history of the defense of the KJV and the Received Text from 1800 to present. The book includes hundreds of testimonies and biographies; sketches of churches, schools, and organizations that have defended the KJV; a digest of reviews and condensations of major books and articles written in defense of the KJV in the past 200 years; excerpts from rare books on this subject which are no longer available; a comprehensive overview of the varied arguments in favor of the KJV. *For Love of the Bible* also gives a history of the modern English versions, beginning with the English Revised of 1881. Also included is a history of textual criticism, revealing that most of the textual scholars from the 19th-century on were rationalists who denied the infallible inspiration of Scripture. The 33-

page bibliography is the most extensive in print on the subject, to our knowledge. A detailed index is also included. The author spent several thousand dollars researching the book and has written several hundred letters in this connection, communicating with men from around the world who stand for the KJV today. Michael Maynard, author of *A History of the Debate over 1 John 5:7,8*, wrote: "For Love of the Bible is a masterpiece. It ought to be in every academic, public, and special library in the world." 460 pages, 5X8, hard cover. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***THE GNOSTICS, THE NEW VERSIONS, AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST*** by Jay P. Green, Sr. (1918- ). This study traces the doctrinal corruptions in the modern critical Greek text to heresies that plagued churches in the 2nd century. Available from Sovereign Grace Trust Fund, P.O. Box 4998, Lafayette, IN 47903. 800-447-9142; 765-447-4122 (voice), [jgreenxx@iquest.net](mailto:jgreenxx@iquest.net), <http://www.chrlitworld.com/http://www.sovgracepub.com>.

***THE KING JAMES VERSION DEFENDED*** by Edward F. Hills. Dr. Hills (1912-1981) was a professionally trained textual scholar as well as a godly Christian. He was a distinguished Latin and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Yale University. He also earned the Th.B. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary and the Th.M. degree from Columbia Theological Seminary. After doing doctoral work at the University of Chicago in New Testament textual criticism, he completed his program at Harvard, earning the Th.D. in this field. Though largely ignored by professional textual critics and translators, Hills has encouraged thousands of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Bible teachers by his defense of the Received Text and his exposure of the unbelief of modern textual criticism. In 1956, he published the first edition of *The King James Version Defended: A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts*. It was enlarged through the years. Key chapters include "A Short History of Unbelief," "A Christian View of the Biblical Text," "The Facts of New Testament Textual Criticism," "Dean Burgon and the Traditional New Testament Text," and "The Textus Receptus and the King James Version." Hills devastated the Westcott-Hort textual theories and exposed the rationalistic foundation of the entire modern version superstructure. Unlike most modern textual scholars, Dr. Hills approached his topic with humility and with confidence in God's promise to preserve the Scriptures. Most of the questions which are raised today in the Bible version debate were already answered by Dr. Hills 50 years ago. 280 pages, 5X8, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

***THE MODERN BIBLE VERSION HALL OF SHAME*** by David Cloud. This volume documents the heresy and apostasy of the most influential names in the field of modern textual criticism and the modern Bible versions of the past 250 years. 361 pages. Available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061. 866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), <http://www.wayoflife.org>.

***THE REVISION REVISED*** by John Burgon, one of the greatest textual scholars of the last 200 years. This is Burgon's masterly refutation of the Westcott-Hort theories of modern textual

criticism. Though published in 1883, it almost as relevant to the Bible text issue now as the day it first appeared. 549 pages, hard bound. Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

**SEVENTY-FIVE PROBLEMS WITH CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY'S BOOK "THE BIBLE VERSION DEBATE"** by Lloyd Streeter. This excellent book is helpful for three categories of believers: (1) It is helpful for those who defend the King James Bible, because the author provides almost a handbook for answering the challenges of the modern Bible version defenders and for clearing up misconceptions pertaining to this important subject. (2) It is helpful for those who are confused by the Bible version issue and do not know who to believe. By using this book, the reader can analyze for himself the modern version position side-by-side with the King James Bible position. (3) It is helpful to those who are leaning toward the critical text, because they will see that many of the standard arguments in its favor are indefensible, or at the very least, they will see that "King James onlyism" is not what they thought it was. Though written from a non-technical position and for a general audience, it is obvious that Pastor Streeter has studied this issue diligently for many years. He is passionate about his subject, zealous for the Word of God, and unhesitating in its defense, while at the same time kindly and patient toward those who are opposed to his view. I believe this attitude pleases the Lord. The author is blessed with the ability to get to the heart of an issue and to simplify difficult concepts. Following are some of the questions that are answered in the book: Do the textual variants impact theology? Have most fundamentalists been KJV only? Do we believe that all non-English Bibles must be translated from the KJV? Is a good new English version possible? Are inspired translations possible? Were any miracles involved in Bible preservation? Is "baptism" a mistake in the KJV? Who owns the term fundamentalist? Is something wrong with the Masoretic Hebrew text? Do historical negative factors make a perfect KJV impossible? Is modern textual criticism destructive? Was Erasmus a Catholic humanist? Does God depend on natural processes for preservation? Was the Traditional Text in the majority throughout history? Was the first Traditional Text version made at the end of the Fourth Century? Do we believe in "reinspiration"? Do we opt for simplistic answers? Do Dead Sea Scrolls vindicate emendations on the basis of conjecture? Didn't the KJV have the Apocrypha? Has the KJV been revised? Is the NASB the best translation? Is the NIV a good translation? Is the KJV hard to read? Is there ever a time to separate over Bible versions? Pastor Streeter concludes the book with two appendixes. The first contains an insightful 29-page review of "From the Mind of God to the Mind of Man." The second edition of Pastor Streeter's book (2003) contains a new appendix critiquing Central Seminary's second book entitled *One Bible Only*? Order from Lloyd Streeter, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1043, LaSalle, IL 61301, [fbt-1pc@core.comm.net](mailto:fbt-1pc@core.comm.net).

**TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING** by Dr. David Sorenson. The following review first appeared in *The Fundamentalist Digest*, Nov.-Dec. 2001: "This 'explosive new' book is a powerful defense of the KJV, as well as a thoroughly documented expose of the modern versions and their inextricable links to religious apostasy. In the reviewer's opinion, this book is not only the newest release on the market on this important issue, it is the most logical presentation and most thoroughly documented treatise since the publication of Dr. D.A. Waite's excellent treatise

several years ago *Defending The King James Bible*. This book fills a much-needed void because it centers on a vital theme that has been vastly neglected in many otherwise excellent studies in this area: the application of the Scriptural doctrine of separation to the Bible textual/translation issue. Because of its logical order, reading format style and extensive documentation, this book can be equally used in a seminary classroom, as a college or Bible institute text, or as resource for church adult training unions. The 296-page book contains 11 information-packed chapters, plus five extensive appendixes, a selected biography divided into two sections citing books and articles. Sorenson has superbly woven the difficult twins of scholarship and simplicity into a treatise that can be readily grasped not only by full-time Christian vocational workers, but also by the average layman in the pew if he will seriously ponder the book's contents. In the book's introduction, (chapter one), the author indicates that he is a 'convert' to the TR/KJV position, having accepted the critical text without question during his college and seminary training. He began his pastoral ministry adhering to that position. After a friend gave him a copy of Dr. David Otis Fuller's book *Which Bible*, however, Sorenson began to see that 'the critical text had connections with apostasy' which made him, as a Fundamentalist, 'quite ill at ease.' The crux of the book is stated on pp. 4-5 when the author relates that the history of the Received Text is associated with 'persecuted, martyred brethren,' while the 'lineage of the critical text' is 'linked to apostasy at virtually every step of its history.' As the book unfolds it becomes readily apparent 'that one lineage is linked with apostasy, and the other with true believers.' On p. 7, Sorenson makes a potent statement that zeroes in on the heart of the issue. Sorenson's quote is the reason why the *Fundamentalist Digest* (FD) editor has become so vitally involved in this issue: It is because leading Fundamentalists are standing now at apostasy's door but are seemingly unaware of where they stand! Sorenson discerningly writes: 'As the debate regarding the textual issue continues, those supporting the critical text come perilously close to the position of "thought" inspiration.' Sorenson staunchly believes 'the integrity of the Word of God is at stake' (p. 9) over this matter, a statement with which the reviewer heartily concurs! Another timely observation by Sorenson is that he believes that loyalist graduates of Fundamentalist schools that promote the critical texts are in danger of moving in a direction that violates Biblical Principles. For Sorenson, as well as this reviewer, 'the issue at hand is the 'integrity, accuracy, and trustworthiness' of 'the Word of God' (p. 13)." Order from Northstar Baptist Ministries, 1820 West Morgan Street, Duluth, MN 55811. Phone: 218-726-0209.

**THREE HUNDRED FIFTY-SIX DOCTRINAL ERRORS IN THE NIV AND OTHER MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS** by Jack Moorman. "The Digest records the bare facts of a warfare that has raged through the centuries over the doctrinal heart of the New Testament. From the beginning, the pressure has been upon God's people to surrender the doctrinal edge of their Sword until it is something not much more than a butter knife! The 356 doctrinal passages listed here are what makes the Authorized Version unique among today's 'Bibles.' Despite the enemy's rage against these precious lines of truth -- in one manuscript, out of another -- they have all come home to their rightful place in the pages of the King James Bible. The Digest is, therefore, not only a record of the substantial support they command, but is also something of a chronicle of their warfare and travels through the manuscript period of transmission history."

Available from Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108, 800-564-6109, [www.BibleForToday.org](http://www.BibleForToday.org).

**MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS--THE DARK SECRET** by Jack Moorman. In my estimation, this 48-page booklet contains one of the best concise presentations in print today refuting the modern versions and defending the King James Bible. Using the popular New International Version as his basis, Pastor Moorman notes the serious omissions in the modern versions, the attack upon the Deity of Jesus Christ, and many other doctrinal corruptions. Some defenders of the modern versions, such as James White, have denied that the modern Bibles weaken the doctrine of Christ's deity, but they are dead wrong. In the 19th century, the Unitarians readily observed that they could support their doctrinal errors much more easily from the critical Greek text than the Received Text. The Unitarians in the first half of the 19th century were among the first to call for the removal of the word "God" in 1 Timothy 3:16 and for the obliteration of 1 John 5:7 from the Bible. The Unitarians could see what James White and D.A. Carson other defenders of the modern versions today claim they cannot see, that the critical Greek text is more in conformity with heretical theology. In *Modern Bible Versions--the Dark Secret*, Pastor Moorman also refutes the Westcott-Hort theory of textual criticism, gives much helpful information about the history of the Bible text, and presents an outline of the all-too-neglected doctrine of Bible preservation. Pastor Moorman has a gift of making the complicated subject of Bible texts and versions understandable to the average Christian. Available from Plain Paths Publishers, P.O. Box 830, Columbus, NC 28722, <http://www.plainpath.org>, 828-863-2736, [plain@juno.com](mailto:plain@juno.com)

